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**AMERICAN SOUTHS: READING SOCIAL MARKERS THROUGH THE
LANDSCAPE**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In
LITERATURE

by

Lara Galas

December 2019

The Dissertation of Lara Galas is approved:

Professor Susan Gillman, chair

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Professor Emerita Loisa Nygaard

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Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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Table of Contents:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Abstract: | iv |
| Acknowledgements:..... | v |
| Introduction: Re-reading Nineteenth-Century American Literatures through Figurative and Physical Landscapes | 1 |
| Chapter One: An Analysis of “the California south” | 18 |
| Chapter Two: The Black Nationalist Trio: Exploring Different Plantation Souths with Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois | 75 |
| Chapter Three: The New Orleans Global South: A Cityscape Intersected by Social Markers and Socio-political Histories | 129 |
| Coda: | 151 |

Abstract
American Souths: Reading Social Markers through the Landscape
Lara Galas

This dissertation, *American Souths: Reading Social Markers through the Landscape*, highlights the unconventional contributions of nineteenth-century novels under the umbrella set of “American literature.” This project unsettles and realigns some of the most enduring literary historical categories—realism and naturalism, regionalism, local color, and dialect literature—by thinking of the novels organized within these categories through their representations of landscape. Read as landscape literature and valued for their location in and commitment to the local, this group of novels by Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, and Hopkins as well as Cable, Chopin, Delany and Du Bois, consistently explore multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and global politics. Their many descriptions of interior and exterior spaces narrate social markers like race, gender, and class in surprisingly similar ways. Each writer, while associated with a distinct US region, thus speaks from a similar perspective, producing critical openings to engage in comparative global conversations that unsettle American exceptionalism and the so-called stability of the nation-state. My project reorients not only spatial categories but also the temporal divisions underlying periodization, thinking outside the nineteenth-century paradigm to gesture back toward pre-California and the hemispheric South. By emphasizing how the colonial residues of the Spanish, French, and Mexican empires persist in the nineteenth century, the project foregrounds American literatures in languages other than English and thus contributes to comparative, transnational approaches to American literature.

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During the first year of the literature Ph.D. program at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), I took a foundational seminar with Professor Loisa Nygaard, “Landscape and Ideology” that shaped the early thinking that would eventually become this dissertation. I am grateful to Professor Nygaard’s persistent push to further define and nuance the different definitions of landscape, space, and landscape literature I use.

In the same year that I took Professor Nygaard’s crucial course, I had the pleasure of taking Professor Gillman’s seminar on “Realism/Naturalism: Race/Nation,” in which she introduced me to a novel that would eventually become one of this project’s first texts, *The Squatter and the Don*. I was struck by Professor Gillman’s ability to facilitate and lead enthusiastic and dynamic seminar discussions. Because of this foundational seminar, I knew I wanted to channel her creative thinking to develop a project that would not only be intellectually rigorous but also socio-politically engaging and meaningful. In our most recent conversations, Professor Gillman and I have arrived at a new working term, literary geographies, which I hope to continue develop and refine in future work.

I had the pleasure of working for Professor Gillman as her Teaching Assistant (T.A.) for two quarters. During each term, she provided me with my first opportunities to guest lecture, opportunities that helped shape my understanding of how to teach nineteenth-century literature to a digitally engrossed audience of undergraduate students. When I recall our “walk-and-talk” meetings we shared on the

way to lecture that extra-rainy winter, I feel grateful to have her on my academic team because of the countless brilliant (and breathless) moments we continue to share in the magic of the redwood forest. I hope to use the lessons I have learned from Professor Gillman, as her T.A. and as her student, to mentor future generation of students.

At the end of my third year, I took three foundational seminars one in literature and the other two in history with Professors Kirsten Silva Gruesz and Kate Jones, respectively. Professor Silva Gruesz's literature seminar, "Reconstructing US Literary History," framed my understanding of the importance of print culture in nineteenth-century American literatures. Through this course, Professor Silva Gruesz and I developed our working relationship. In fact, I had the pleasure of working with Professor Silva Gruesz as a T.A. for two of her undergraduate courses, "Nineteenth-Century American Literature" and "Latino Expressions." The nineteenth-century American course was my first teaching appointment and I was inspired by Professor Silva Gruesz's enthusiasm and expertise on the subject matter. and my students, who braved the dreaded Friday 8 a.m. section with me.

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recipe for disaster, Ian provided me with love, patience, food, and laughter at a time when I needed compassion, understanding, nourishment, and joy the most.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who never stop believing in me.

Introduction: Re-reading Nineteenth-Century American Literatures through Figurative and Physical Landscapes

Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. Awakening from the stupefying effects of the vice of over-industry and the deadly apathy of luxury, they [...embody] the growing interest in the care and preservation of forests and wild places in general, and in the half wild parks and gardens of towns. (John Muir 1) ¹

Before launching into this project's specific goal of reading *literary* landscapes, I want to highlight how *physical* landscapes sometimes serve as representations of "nation" more broadly in American culture. For example, certain cultivated yet natural spaces within the United States, such as national parks, are carefully manipulated to reflect a national ideology by emphasizing sovereignty over important and diverse regional features—from the geysers of Yellowstone to the peaks of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia². These differences reveal an unsettled, ever-changing eco-national ideology rather than a stable united nation. When President Grant established Yellowstone as the first national park in 1872, the country was in the throes of Reconstruction, a tumultuous time period when politicians attempted to repair and re-unite the nation South and North. The push toward exploring the "unchartered" frontier to the West of the Mississippi brutally and systematically erased indigenous populations in order to reflect a pristine and natural space for aesthetic and visual consumption, ignoring the violence of settler colonialism.

These natural spaces, which are federally preserved and protected, represent increasing state control over occupied lands, which already complicates the idea that

these national parks *belong* to the nation-state. Writer and nature-lover John Muir garnered federal and public support for a government sanctioned program to preserve and protect these natural reserves while simultaneously subconsciously participating in the displacement of thousands of indigenous peoples. His ideas contributed to a rapidly forming hegemonic ideology of an “American” identity³. This increasingly nationalist ideology continues to adapt to changing socio-political environments, but it remains exclusively white in its intentionally raceless paradigm. For example, in 1936, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) asserts that “[t]here is nothing so American as our national parks.... The fundamental idea behind the parks...is that the country belongs to the people, that it is in process of making for the enrichment of the lives of all of us,” (FDR) we can see from this brief discussion about national parks that they are part and parcel of a national ideology because they function as “natural” objects belonging to the country in power⁴. In other words, the national parks naturalize white hegemony over the landscapes of the west and through the fantasies they evoke to help feed the national ethos of rugged, self-reliant (male) individualism and erode commitment to any more localized sense of community, ensuring that the nation reigns supreme.

The “American” category identifies national parks as belonging to the United States, in a similar way that “American” describes the non-canonical nineteenth-century novels I closely examine. These novels are considered to be, among many things, products of American culture and, thus, belong to the U.S. While nominally “American,” though, these minoritized (non-canonical) novels are written by

minorities: non-white women and men, who during the time of their writing, would have been deemed foreign, second-class citizens⁵. Regardless of their own complicated socio-economic and political identities, they produced novels that narrated different social markers—race, gender, class, and language—within settings that took place across the Americas. Despite the ongoing work of a national ideology, whose impulse it is to collapse those differences into what is often dubbed “the melting pot nation,” the mere presence of these non-canonical novels disrupts that narrative. For example, Toni Morrison, in her foundational text, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1993) explains that:

There seems to be a more or less tacit agreement among literary scholars that, because American literature has been clearly the preserve of white male views, genius, and power, those views, genius, and power are without relationship to and removed from the overwhelming presence of black people in the United States. (Morrison 5).

Therefore, the crafting of a raceless American identity is not accidental and one of the results of such a hegemonic ideology is a national literature that intentionally attempts to ignore the ignorable: the reality of race. Morrison explains that her work in *Playing the Dark* “put[s]forth an argument for extending the study of American literature into what I hope will be a wider landscape” (3). Morrison goes on to explain that she “want[s] to draw a map, so to speak, of a critical geography and use that map to open as much space for discovery, intellectual adventure, and close exploration as did the original charting of the New World—without the mandate for conquest” (3). Morrison is redrawing boundaries of a nation that prides itself on a notion of unity despite difference, a nationalist ideology that relies heavily on thinking of whiteness

as a universal representative of every *American* citizen. Moreover, Morrison correctly contends that there is no excuse for such racial erasure within the United States

because:

The literature of almost all these countries [the United States, England, France, Germany, Spain, and South American countries], however, is now the subject to sustained critiques of its racialized discourse. The United States is a curious exception, even though it stands out as being the oldest democracy in which a black population accompanied (if one can use that word) and in many cases preceded the white settlers. ... For excellent reasons of state—because European sources of cultural hegemony were dispersed but not yet valorized in the new country—the process of organizing American coherence through a distancing Africanism became the operative mode of a new cultural hegemony. (Morrison 8)

Therefore, the seemingly raceless quality in a novel such as *McTeague* highlights “the process of organizing American coherence through a distancing Africanism” (8).

Similarly, through my reading of American souths, my project too explores what a redrawn America looks like: rather than a unified nation, it is a contradictory and often conflicted collection of states with residues from a pre-colonial past and a long era of settler-colonialism.

Given that the historical, current, and often-violent struggles over land and property are sometimes forgotten, ignored, or repressed, I will now take a moment to acknowledge that the land on which I am producing this eco-intersectional scholarship is occupied. The University of California, Santa Cruz sits on Ohlone land. Through this land acknowledgement I hope to not only meaningfully engage with the history of the contested landscapes described in nineteenth-century novels but also the currently still occupied and rapidly changing physical environment in which we all live regardless of the social markers that divide us. This practice of acknowledging

the land on which we live primes us to learn to hold space for the land, the people living on it, and the residues of former colonial projects. This kind of environmental priming is at the heart of this dissertation.

My project explores ways of reading nineteenth-century *landscape literature*, a critical framework that approaches landscape as a medium and product of language, uncovering how writers who are read for their associations with different literary regions translate those specific locations into their novels. “To translate” in this sense engages place—as both spatial and temporal—revealing—especially in nineteenth-century U.S. literatures written in English yet embedding multiple languages other than English—how race differently undergirds what I call multiple souths. This spatial, linguistic, and temporal lens frames the literary landscape of this project extending from the ranchos of California to the plantations in the U.S. South beyond the borders toward the global south. For example, I analyze how authors María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Helen Hunt Jackson, Frank Norris, Pauline Hopkins, Martin Delany, W.E.B. Du Bois, Kate Chopin, and George Washington Cable are not typically read comparatively because their works have been divided into categories like regionalism and naturalism.

The dissertation will consist of four chapters: an introduction defining key terms—such as landscape literature and an eco-intersectional framework—and contextualizing the critical and historical stakes of my project. Chapter One, “An Analysis of ‘the California South,’” lays out the different mappings of California through the literary visions of Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, and Norris. Chapter Two,

“The Black Nationalist Trio: Exploring Different Plantation Souths with Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois,” investigates how three key figures in nineteenth-century American literature resist the “ethnic literature” categorization in order to narrate the haunted landscapes of slavery, past and present. Chapter Three, “The New Orleans Global South: A Cityscape Intersected by Social Markers,” explores how authors Cable and Chopin narrate the changing land- and cityscapes of New Orleans through their protagonists, Joseph Frowenfeld and Edna Pontellier, outsiders to the Louisiana Creole community, and map our understanding of this city as a nexus of colonial powers.

Addressing the literary genres this project explores, Richard Lehan’s succinct definitions offer a lens for quickly reviewing the distinctions among realism, naturalism, and regionalism⁶. He explains that “[r]ealism involved the literary attempt to write an objective narrative, to depict the outside world as honestly and truthfully as possible” (3). Lehan continues with a discussion of how naturalism and realism are more linked than not by explaining that:

[n]aturalism carried realism one step further, added a biological and philosophical component to the writing of fiction, and stressed the connection between literature and science. Naturalism presumed that a theory of environment and hereditary along with Darwinian and post-Darwinian theories of evolution would ground the literary work in a factual and scientific context. (Richard Lehan 3).

Later in his text, Lehan connects regionalism to realism explaining that “[t]he idea of realism owes much to regional writing” (92) because of how regionalist authors relied on “the realistic method” (92) to depict specific regions across the United States.

Lehan goes on to explain that regionalists’ “uses of place in the American novel tell a

coherent story about the loss of the frontier, the significance of the small town in American ...and the rise of the city that became the next order of human life” (93, emphasis added). Where my project diverges from this assessment of a “*coherent* story” about the turbulent nineteenth-century American landscapes is by asserting that the stories are anything but coherent. Through intimate introductions to this nation’s forming and re-forming of communities from San Diego, CA to Boston, MA in the work of Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, Norris, Delany, Hopkins, Du Bois, Cable, and Chopin, we get a bird’s eye view, figuratively and physically, of U.S. control over this “new” and “wild” land. Therefore, these American novelists not only introduce readers to a specific New Orleans of 1803, but they also offer audiences a comparison of temporally and spatially different Americas, a nation developing alongside the changing landscape from 1859 to 1911⁷. Because of attempting to represent these different Americas to national and even global audiences, these authors’ novels contribute, directly and indirectly, to the formation of a hegemonic American nationalism. Instead of reading these novels as being representative of a *coherent* (Lehan) American story, an eco-intersectional framework allows for a comparative reading that demonstrates how these novels reflect multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and global politics, underscoring how these U.S. authors reach beyond national borders and push against the idea of a fixed nation-state.

The concept of landscape literature realigns some of the most enduring literary historical categories—realism and naturalism, regionalism, local color, and dialect literature—by thinking of the novels produced through these categories as

landscape literature. Cultural geographer Carl Sauer defines landscape “as an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural” (Sauer 300). What if, though, “the area”—a physical and human geography—is located in Du Bois’s Toomsville, Alabama, the fictional southern town that is the setting of his novel, *Quest of the Silver Fleece*? Or what if the action takes place on Norris’s Californian Rancho de los Muertos in *The Octopus*? While these different regions, the U.S. South and Southwest, have their own distinct literary regionalisms, they also assemble a potentially powerful southern cluster that can bring nineteenth-century American literatures together in innovative ways. Moreover, reflecting on the regions depicted in this project allows audiences to not only *read* these landscapes but also *map* them through space and time, emphasizing the dual linguistic and spatial element to landscape literature. Therefore, in this dissertation I compare different representations of landscape, from fictional settings in nineteenth-century novels, to paintings and maps as literary touchstones, in order to rethink such conventional literary divisions.

Therefore, rather than a parallel comparison between two discrete entities, the region and the nation, I put them together relationally as a set of exchanges. “South-by-Southwest” is the frame for this transnational reading. Capital-S “South” refers to the American Southwest and “south,” lowercased, refers to a larger network—the global south. Uncovering how writers who are read for their associations with different literary regions *translate* those specific locations into their novels calls for a translation practice that engages place as both spatial and temporal. These sets of

exchanges manifest in California as first a colony first of Spain, then part of Mexico, then a U.S. territory, and finally California as a state. The greater hemispheric south emerges comparatively through its intertwined histories as colonies of the Spanish, French, British empires, as well as the United States, as both empire and nation. Analyzing these sets of exchanges, a series of hidden histories—colonial and unofficial—illustrates how the colonial residues of the Americas create racial tensions between settler and inhabitant in these ever-shifting geopolitical boundaries. Thus, the U.S. Southwest is represented as yet unmarked geopolitically, a not-quite *tabula rasa*. In the U.S. South, which I discuss explore in chapter two, race functions differently making the spaces appear long settled but have in fact been unsettled by race and rotating colonial powers.

Speaking to the ever-shifting geopolitical boundaries, Du Bois with his idea of the color-line points explicitly to the ways that race travels through continents and islands, nations and empires, and gestures implicitly at the multiple languages that have historically defined these locations⁸. As a changing concept of human relationship that can be traced across time and space, the color-line, speaking prophetically in 1903 at the turn of the century, suggests a way of reading nineteenth-century American fiction as a mapping of the linguistic landscape of race in the Americas. In the southwestern U.S. regions, for example in California specifically, the focus is on land settlement creating a seemingly *raceless* environment. In the U.S. South, however, we see the inverse—race is the deciding factor in the settling of different regions and landscapes. Du Bois's prophetic and retrospective color-line

allows us to approach the varieties of world-wide race relations in terms of the global south, a term that has been used to bring together the de- and neo-colonized or under-developed regions of the world.

A trio of practitioners of landscape as literary art, Raymond Williams, Gloria Anzaldúa, and W.J.T. Mitchell, together offer the possibility of a re-reading of place in American literature. The intersection between theories of space and landscape ideology on the one hand, and critical race and ethnic studies on the other, shapes my approach to the study of space in American literatures. Racial legibility, I argue, makes the landscape socially and culturally visible. Within the context of a literary landscape, “racial legibility” means that race becomes visible to a reader along a “racial spectrum.” Thus, I use Anzaldúa, Williams, and Mitchell as a theoretical framework to examine novels like Ruiz de Burton’s 1885 *The Squatter and the Don* that employ the landscape as a medium of reading race and an undoing of the official narrative of a united nation.

From a cultural studies perspective, Anzaldúa asserts, in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, the importance of re-reading a landscape that is entrenched in a colonial past: the U.S.-Mexican border—*una herida abierta* that haunts Ruiz de Burton’s and Jackson’s historical romances of California and even Norris’s Naturalist and seemingly race-less novels of California. Anzaldúa re-writes the “official” history of U.S.-Mexican geo-political relations in the borderlands by stating that “Gringos in the U.S. Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens—whether they possess documents or not, whether

they're Chicanos, Indians, or Blacks. Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot" (Anzaldúa 3). These "documents" include the fiction of the nineteenth-century that reflects and refracts the Nation. Anzaldúa offers a further opening of the wound to include the opportunity to re-read an embodied landscape where "lo pasado me estira pa'tras / y lo presente pa'delante" (3). This line comes at a key linguistic moment where Anzaldúa resists translation and leaves her Spanish poetry to anatomize the violent process of the border over time and space. Not only is the geo-political borderland at stake for Anzaldúa but also the multiple gendered translations of the histories and literatures of conquest—from Cortes to Polk and Ruiz de Burton to Norris. These kinds of translations require and produce a sense of complex borderland time á la Anzaldúa: the push and pull of the past and the present on her body violently grounded in that ambiguous middle space.

Building on the cultural studies perspective, in a way similar to Anzaldúa's invocation of the "open wound" in the Southwest, Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* establishes his frustration with the seemingly benign changes to the British countryside. The land does not exist in these descriptions; instead, the buildings that have been built on top of the land are the real attraction. The land, as it stands, is simply an ingredient that goes into the making of an image of a meeting of the rural and urban worlds. Labor and laborers, in other words, have been erased. Like Anzaldúa, Williams confronts his readers by asserting that a process of "systematic [...] exploitation and seizure" has replaced a former way of life (Williams 105). The key word is "systematic" because the change to the landscape is

not accidental; rather it is deliberate and intentional. Furthermore, a word such as “systematic” suggests that larger powers are at play, and that the power of these larger systems cannot be defeated because, according to Williams, society has accepted the changes to the landscape as inevitable rather than the result of the ongoing work by human agents. The way that Williams and Anzaldúa re-read the landscape through a cultural studies lens is part of the process of *recovering* the landscape; they are re-populating the landscape with a new history of a population forgotten⁹.

Because the landscape is not empty of time and devoid of language, I want to think of landscape as a “linguistic medium” that brings together the other two dimensions—space and time. In *Landscape and Power*, Mitchell’s landscape is material and present visually—i.e., his analysis of landscape paintings—in time and space and, I would add, language. Landscape has a “semiotic structure,” meaning that language references specific colonial residues, as Anzaldúa and Williams also claimed. Thinking of landscape as a linguistic medium through which to re-read a “tradition of cultural signification and communication” is key to my project’s translational focus because I am expanding on Mitchell’s visual studies and Anzaldúa’s and Williams’s cultural studies to stake a claim for fiction¹⁰.

While these authors are sometimes siloed as speaking from specific regions, reading them as a collective allows for what Mitchell describes as “a close reading of specific colonial landscapes [that] may help us to see, not just the successful domination of a place by imperial representations, but the signs of resistance to

empire from both within and without” (Mitchell 20-21). Reading colonial landscapes both for imperial representations and signs of resistance produces a mapping attuned to the power relations of a textual and visual order. Such a reading method allows the contours—spatial, temporal and linguistic—of the different Souths, southwestern and southern literatures, to emerge discreetly and collectively. The practice of landscape literature now links the Californio rancho to the swamps of Louisiana to the maroon communities of the Caribbean to the segregated towns and cities of the urban South.

The physicality of these fictional landscapes exists simultaneously in the public and private spheres. For example, while the southern plantations and the western ranchos dominantly reside in the public sphere, the private, often female, and domestic sphere of set-piece scenes take place in commonly known spaces including but not limited to parlors, boarding houses, huts, and even balls. The spatial layout, the physicality, of these spaces—public and private—depends on the language of their naming; the physical locations are linguistically constructed, mapping and then reading their place-names. Languageing the term “south” itself allows the multiple lower-cased souths to become legible and comparable in all their asymmetry. The common denominator is the uneven development of these lower-cased souths: all are mapped temporally in later or lagging states of development, their multiple foreign languages produced by empire and its civilizational discourse. This reading of nineteenth-century American literature allows us to see a geography and timeline outside of the nation’s spatial borders and chronological boundaries, mapping multiple histories, unfinished pasts, and unknown futures on the color-line.

I envision my project as one that may offer another way of reading and seeing the nineteenth century from the multivocal perspectives of authors whose works were considered “lesser,” “marginal,” or “minoritized.” This other way of reading nineteenth-century American landscape and literature asks that the readers use an *eco-intersectional* lens to explore these novels and these different regions of the American Souths. By “eco-intersectional,” I am invoking a literary framework that is not only intersectional in practice but is also rooted in ecocriticism¹¹. My project contributes to the field of ecocriticism through my explorations of the many intersections of social markers, literature, and indigenous and colonial histories with the physical environment. A foundational scholar within the field of ecocriticism, Cheryll Glotfelty, defines ecocriticism as:

the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty xviii)

Like the reading guide that Glotfelty offers us in the above quotation, this project seeks not only to “[take] an earth-centered approach to literary studies” but also to put different—seemingly paradoxical—theoretical frameworks into conversation with one another in order to attain a richer understanding of the complex socio-political structures at work at the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century. Through an *eco-intersectional* framework, we can see Glotfelty’s vision for a “literature [that] does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, [one that] plays

a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, *and ideas* interact” (Glotfelty vii)¹².

Thinking of landscape as a linguistic medium through which to re-read a “tradition of cultural signification and communication” is key to my project’s translational focus because I am expanding on Mitchell’s visual studies and Anzaldúa’s and Williams’s cultural studies to stake a claim for fiction, as Pauline Hopkins does in the preface to her novel *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* where she argues that “fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and customs—religious, political, and social” (Hopkins 13).

Beyond Hopkins’s spatial—North and South—gesture, she also points toward a larger literature of place in which she is sometimes read as a regionalist, while also, notably for my purpose, an author not only of dialect fiction but a transnationalist who pushes national boundaries. Such a translational and historicized reading of landscape offers a way of re-reading minoritized and canonical nineteenth-century US authors for their perspectives on race and place, putting their works on a continuum from openly raced to seemingly raceless. While these authors are sometimes siloed, as speaking from specific regions—from the Californio rancho to the missions to the railroaded California, from the swamps of Louisiana to the maroon communities of the Caribbean to the segregated towns and cities of the urban South—reading the landscape and the texts in tandem allows for what W.J.T. Mitchell describes as the “possibility that a close reading of specific colonial landscapes may help us to see,

not just the successful domination of a place by imperial representations, but the signs of resistance to empire from both within and without. Like all scenes framed in a rearview mirror, these landscapes may be closer to us than they appear” (Mitchell 20-21). Reading colonial landscapes both for imperial representations and signs of resistance produces a mapping attuned to the power relations of a textual and visual order. Such a reading method will allow the contours—spatial, temporal and linguistic—of the different Souths, southwestern and southern literatures, to emerge discretely and collectively.

In order to highlight and bridge the gap between the visual and the textual, I emphasize the process of *linguaging*, defined by Walter Mignolo as “thinking and writing between languages [...] moving away from the idea that language is a fact (e.g., a system of syntactic, semantic, and phonetic rules), and moving toward the idea that speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction” (Mignolo 226). Landscape approached through the process of linguaging offers a way to read comparatively, to map the Souths in these literary case studies, the rancho and plantation worlds, as the hybrid, textual-visual, products of moving between different languages and sign-systems, drawing on translation and adaptation to link them.

Including a discussion of seeing and looking as part of the act of reading will nuance my approach to the legibility of the landscape. To read the landscape, after all, suggests *seeing* and *looking* at the land. Highlighting the containment of the words on a page, these words *represent* the land similarly to how landscape paintings, also

contained within a type of frame, represent an artist's view of the land. I want to expand how we think of these representations of the landscape, either legibly or visually, by recognizing that the process of reading is a physical one—the reader *holds* a book (or for some contemporary readers, an e-book), *touches* the pages (or swipes the screen), and *sees* the words on the page. Moreover, even gazing at a painting, spectators must use their eyes to *see* the painting. While carefully avoiding the simplification that *everything and anything is a text*, I want to emphasize the physical process at work in reading. The physicality of the reading process broadens our conception of reading practices and what we read because not only are the authors, Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, and Martin Delany, *Blake or the Huts of America*, describing the landscapes of the southern U.S., Canada, and Cuba for their audiences, they are also making the characters *physically* engage with the landscape. This physical engagement mirrors our physical engagement—turning pages, annotating, and highlighting passages—with the texts.

Chapter One: An Analysis of “the California south”

As previously defined in the introduction, this project analyzes *landscape literature*, which is literature that paints vivid and realistic scenes of a particular locale or region for its readers, in order to question how this literature troubles competing and conflicting national ideologies within the fluid boundaries of a quickly developing and industrializing nineteenth-century America. In this first chapter, I have grouped together three novels—Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona* (1884), María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), and Frank Norris’s *McTeague* (1899)—as a case study of landscape-focused works literature that take place in different regions of California. These novels, however, have not been typically analyzed together. For example, only one of the authors, Frank Norris, is often considered to have a wider audience as one of the country’s most prolific naturalists and is therefore usually set apart from regional writers, especially his female counterparts.

In recent history, though, the two female writers addressed in this chapter, Helen Hunt Jackson and María Amparo Ruíz de Burton, have been “recovered” and re-evaluated for their literary and even political contributions. In fact, Jackson has been rightfully included in the canon of foundational nineteenth-century American literature and not siloed into the regional/local color genre and forgotten from the national imaginary. Jackson’s works stand alongside other pioneering American novels that serve to showcase specific and diverse regions within the United States. *Ramona*, for example, stirred local and national desires to craft a California fantasy

heritage that allowed local and national citizens to willfully forget the violent removal of indigenous peoples from their lands, fondly reminisce over a long-gone *Spanish* gentility, and embrace an Anglo-Saxon version of Spanish nobility. Carey McWilliams famously coins the term “fantasy heritage,” depicting this idyllic and fictional California as having a mild climate, fertile soil, where “Indians merely cast seeds on the ground, letting them fall where chance deposited them, and relaxed in the shade of the nearest tree while a provident and kindly nature took over” (15) ¹³. McWilliams soothes his readers with the description of the “golden light” of the borderlands. In fact, McWilliams begins this chapter, “The Fantasy Heritage,” like a bedtime story as is evident from the first words: “Long, long ago the borderlands were settled by Spanish grandees and caballeros, a gentle people, accustomed to the luxurious softness of fine clothes, to well-trained servants, to all the amenities of civilized European living” (15). However, McWilliams quickly awakens his readers from this dreamy scene by explaining that:

this life of Spain-away-from-Spain in the borderlands was very romantic, idyllic, very beautiful...
Indeed, it's really a shame that it never existed. (McWilliams 15)

McWilliams understands that this fantasy heritage is far from innocuous and, thus, begins to question and trace the origin of this fictionalized history. He starts by asking why:

the largest women's clubs, composed exclusively of Anglo-American women, hold an annual 'gala Spanish fiesta program' in 'full Spanish costume' to admire Señor Raoul de Ramirez' presentation of *The Bells of San Gabriel*? And, lastly, why do so many restaurants, dance halls, swimming pools, and theaters exclude persons of Mexican descent? (McWilliams 16)

Their novels contributed to a national working definition of who is and who is not an American citizen—as well as who is and who is not a regionalist or local color writer. Only one of the authors in this chapter was at one point considered to be a regionalist writer of California, Jackson, but only one of them, Ruiz de Burton, was born in the region she addresses. Therefore, each writer's novel helps create a distinct and developing nineteenth-century California that McWilliams reads and analyzes in the twentieth century in his 1948 text.

Interestingly, María Amparo Ruíz de Burton is not considered to be a Regional/ local color writer because her Californio/Mexican-born status renders her as an outsider, a not-quite-American American writer. She is, however, as the first female Mexican American author to publish in English. Moreover, she published her first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872), anonymously out of fear that the U.S. audience would further scrutinize her grammar if they knew that the novel was written by a non-native English speaker. This categorization, though, is limiting because it is based upon her ethnic difference and not her literary contributions. However, in 2009, Elisa Warford explores just how wide-reaching Ruiz de Burton's work is. Warford analyzes Ruiz de Burton's "skillful adaptations of literary forms" (5) and asserts that "Like *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) perhaps the best-known California social protest novel, *The Squatter and the Don* borrows from several different genres that are well suited to social protest, including verbatim legislation, the jeremiad, sentimental romance, and naturalism" (5-6)¹⁴. As evident from Warford's assertions, literary genres are not always the best form of categorization,

and some of their limitations are manifest in their tendency to isolate and quarantine literary works written by minoritized authors. Therefore, as this project unfolds, I hope to demonstrate fruitful ways of questioning and troubling these literary genres and who is and is not included in them. The historical romance genre, which serves as a catalyst for the creation of California's fantasy heritage, can also, unexpectedly, work toward social change for the indigenous in California.

Jackson's California missions in *Ramona*, Ruiz de Burton's rancho of southern California in *The Squatter and the Don*, and Norris's developing urban cityscape of San Francisco in *McTeague* represent how time produces race. Their novels take place during one of this nation's moments of flux: increased European immigration, growth of the railroads, and the country's emergence as a center for capitalism. Landscape description functions as a linguistic mode that politicizes social problems through the politics of language itself—its hierarchies, dialects, and the multiple registers.

Thinking of landscape as a linguistic mode helps to frame the wide range of topics that each novel addresses, such as struggles over land ownership or surviving the debilitating temptation of greed. *The Squatter and the Don*, for example, centers on one family's struggle against an encroaching United States, whereas *Ramona* depicts another family's struggle against a backdrop of U.S.-backed atrocities systematically committed against indigenous tribes from California's Central Valley. But in *Ramona*, this important socio-political analysis is ultimately engulfed by the romance story within the novel between Ramona and Alessandro. Finally, while

McTeague is supposedly focused on the rise of American capitalism, it is also filled with interconnected stories concerning several families, across race, gender, nationality, and class. For all their differences, these novels are interconnected through their paralleled structures that narrate a particular vision of California.

While each writer explores and develops her/his vision of California, the very land in California is being fought over, claimed, and sold by ordinary people and their representatives, political and otherwise, all of which forms part of the larger narrative of becoming American. As discussed in the introduction, by becoming American, one declares an allegiance to a national ideology, one that rests on being intentionally raceless; once you become an American, any identity beyond a patriotic one is often viewed as suspect and thus questioned. For example, as Walter Michaels argues in *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (1995), “that nativism in the period just after World War I involved not only a reassertion of the distinction between American and un-American but a crucial redefinition of the terms in which it might be made” (2). In other words, while the construction of the American identity changes over time and place, the dialectical structure of “us” as Americans and “them” or “other” as un-American, remains intact, prompting scholars to trace the trajectory of nativism and white supremacy. In fact, the sprawling state of 1850 California is a space that facilitates this systemic process of minimizing the pressure and presence of social markers like race, gender, and class by emphasizing local treasures, such as twentieth-century federally-funded state and national parks and reserves, that easily fit into the nation’s archive of natural resources and beauty¹⁵.

This kind of fantasy eco-heritage narrative reflects a national imaginary that is carefully preserving itself as implicitly or explicitly white-male, preserving an entitled sense of sovereignty over occupied lands, traceable to projects such as Manifest Destiny, that have long been historical sites of violence, contention, and theft.

These annexed lands are now considered part of the southwestern region of the United States and the focus of this chapter. The state of California serves as a case study that invites and facilitates an ecocritical approach to reading by grouping and reading together Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, and Norris, each of whom develops and describes a particular California. Each author's vision of California establishes the presence of multiple Californias that are further defined historically—entrenched in the political and the social—in that they translate the unfolding failures of U.S. official history on the different contested landscapes, such as the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which has marked the land with a colonial residue that cannot be erased by a lingua franca. These lingering linguistic colonial residues, then, help to represent a landscape that, although established and seemingly settled in terms of geopolitical borders, is not stable in terms of a united nation and/or republic. Therefore, while race functions differently in each novel, we get to see the multilinguality—through the different functions of race along the racial spectrum—of different Californias that eventually unsettle the idea of a *United States*. In terms of legibility, race is at one end of a spectrum, implied by the presence of multiple Californias. As we move along this racial spectrum away from literature that is

explicitly raced and/or racist, we arrive at seemingly “racelessness” category, where we find novels like *McTeague* and even *The Awakening*.

For each writer, her/his particular California appears to be *raceless* because of the focus on creating a specific representation of California where race, gender, and even class are swept under the larger, less divisive and more dominant categories of national identity. Therefore, these three writers, two of whom are lesser known women writers, have yet to be read together not only for their descriptions of particular California regions but also for how these descriptions of different California landscapes *minimize* the importance of socially produced markers of race, gender, and class. Ironically, however, each writer actively bears the burden of explicitly exploring other, often contentious and socio-politically produced concepts, including citizenship, indigenous sovereignty, and the rise of capitalism.

The multiple Californias are further defined historically—entrenched in the political and the social—in that they translate the failures of US official history that have unfolded on the different contested landscapes. As Edward Said explains in his essay, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” “the colonial experience, which at bottom is the replacement of one geographical sovereignty, an imperialist one, by another, native force. More subtle and complex is the unending cultural struggle over territory, which necessarily involves overlapping memories, narratives, and physical structures” (Said 247-248). These lingering linguistic colonial residues, then, help to re-present a landscape that, although established and seemingly settled in terms of geopolitical borders, is not stable in terms of a united Nation and/or Republic.

My comparative reading of the three novels set during the nineteenth century in a developing California demonstrates how race relations meets realism in fictional landscapes that suggest that anyone other than the “rightful owner” of the land will inevitably suffer at the hands of the land in the harsh and unsettled environments of this last frontier. Therefore, while each author’s California appears to be *raceless* within a particular representation of the land, the texts reveal how the presence of race persists within a sought-after hegemonic republic.

Exploring California’s Fantasy Heritage with Helen Hunt Jackson

Helen Hunt Jackson’s 1884 *Ramona* is a historical romance that centers on Ramona, a mixed-race orphan with a mysterious background including a Lothario father and an indigenous mother. Ramona reluctantly taken in by Señora Moreno, owner of one of the local ranchos and there falls in love with Alessandro, a Temecula indigenous man who works for the Moreno hacienda, seasonally, during sheep-shearing season—and whose Italianized, Spanish name is a clear example of Jackson’s shaky understanding of the language of complex race relations in California. However, Señora Moreno strongly disapproves of their budding relationship, so Ramona and Alessandro elope. The scenes in the novel centered on detailed landscape descriptions offer an opening into the scaffolding of race in the early U.S. For example, in a scene I will return to later in this section, after Ramona and Alessandro elope, they take refuge in an isolated cañon, which represents a liminal space literally between two mountains and figuratively between two different

cultures. However, their freedom in the wilderness is only temporary, much like this novel's political impact at the time of its publication.

The formal limitations of the romance genre undermined Jackson's political ambitions for the narrative. Her characters' difficult journey of escape through the rough terrain of a seemingly "wild" California is less about the landscape or social relations unfolding within it and more about their romance. Unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe's politically explosive *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that was credited with starting the Civil War, Jackson's *Ramona* does not encourage legislation to save the "Mission Indians" from the systematic extermination campaigns against indigenous peoples that were rampant at the time of the novel's publication. Instead, the audience actively disregards race and racial violence by falling in love with the romance story of Ramona and Alessandro that ultimately, through the child of their union erases markers of difference, contributing to California's fantasy heritage.

The novel opens with "sheep-shearing time in Southern California" (Jackson 1), which is our first clue that the landscape, including harvest times, will be a key feature of the narrative. After establishing the time of year, the narrator continues with a description of Señora Gonzaga Moreno, the owner of the Moreno ranch, explaining that she is "[a]n exceedingly clever woman for her day and generation" (1). Next, while the novel is titled after Ramona, a character we have yet to meet, the narrator tells us that another novel could have easily been written about Señora Moreno but that novel "would have been a romance" (1), opening the genre discussion on the first page. This subjunctive and speculative future prepares the

reader for what McWilliams refers to as California's fantasy heritage tradition. Then, we get a fascinating description of the different geographies that contribute to Señora Moreno's identity: "sixty years of the best of old Spain and the wildest of New Spain, Bay of Biscay, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean,--the waves of them all had tossed destinies for the Señora" (1). In this description, we get Senora's age, but also her lineage. Moreover, the narrator historicizes this lineage through value judgments by explaining that she represents the "best" of the old world, Spain and "the wildest of New Spain, Bay of Biscay, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean" all of which mirror the path of Spanish colonization in North America. Finally, these geographies are water-based, suggesting the fluid, and therefore rapid motion of colonization. As we see from the beginning, this novel is a prime example of landscape literature. In this chapter, I will be reading scenes where Jackson, via a sometimes-unreliable narrator, inadvertently highlights the intersection of the history of California, including the ever-shifting social markers, with descriptions of the landscape.

In the first example, the narrator continues describing how the Moreno rancho was established stating that the Moreno "house was one of the best specimens to be found in California of the representative house of the half barbaric, half elegant, wholly generous and free-handed life led there by Mexican men and women of degree in the early part of this century, under the rule of the Spanish and Mexican viceroys, when the laws of the Indies were still the law of the land, and its old name, 'New Spain,' was an ever-present link and stimulus to the warmest memories and deepest patriotisms of its people" (Jackson 13). Once again, Jackson, via the narrator,

dedicates time to explain the changing governing powers, but this history is secondary to the romance of Ramona and Alessandro. Historicizing how General Moreno, Señora's deceased husband, came to possess the Moreno estate, the narrator explains that he:

owned all the land within a radius of forty miles—forty miles westward, down the valley to the sea; forty miles eastward, into the San Fernando Mountains; and good forty miles more or less along the coast. The boundaries were not very strictly defined; there was no occasion, those happy days, to reckon land by inches. It might be asked, perhaps, just how General Moreno owned all this land, and the question might not be easy to answer. It was not and could not be answered to the satisfaction of the United States Land Commission, which, after the surrender of California, undertook to sift and adjust Mexican land titles; and that was the way it had come about that Señora Moreno now called herself a poor woman. (Jackson 14)

Jackson, thus, in this nostalgic moment, reflects that in “those happy days...boundaries were not very strictly defined” (14). The narrator also suggests that this desire to “reckon land by inches” is a uniquely American quality since the “United States Land Commission” did not recognize “Mexican land titles,” instead, taking it upon themselves to “sift and adjust” them to the benefit of the new empire (14). Jackson subtly criticizes the United States' actions in its annexing of California through the narrator, who demonstrates a biased perspective, explaining that:

[t]he people of the United States have never in the least realized that the taking possession of California was not only a conquering of Mexico, but a conquering of California as well; that the real bitterness of the surrender was not so much to the empire which gave up the country, as to the country itself which was given up. Provinces passed back and forth in the ignominy and humiliation of defeat, with none of the dignities or compensations of the transaction. (Jackson 14)

Once again, Jackson, via the narrator, actively participates in the construction of this California fantasy heritage when she describes that the state of California is not so

much a loss for Mexico, the “empire,” but a loss for Californios; they are not Mexicans but Californios, distinct and exceptional.

In a verdant description of the Moreno property, we learn that the “garden [is] never without flowers, summer or winter” (17), an Edenic setting. Moreover, we almost forget that people, specifically indigenous people, actively steward the land. The orchards, the meadows, and the rivers all flow without any description of people working to maintain its vegetation. In fact, until the narrator reminds us that the Señora is the owner, there is no mention of people at all. The land seems to have a life of its own; a fertile prize for anyone who can own it. Further, because the narrator makes use of the personal pronoun “you,” the narrator invites new spectators: the readers who “at whatever time of year [...may sit] on the Señora’s south veranda” (18). The land invites spectators but is closed off in terms of ownership, Señora Moreno, the dubious “poor woman” (13).

Not until chapter three do we learn of Ramona’s mysterious origin story. Hers is one that mirrors Jackson’s contribution to California’s fantasy heritage because it is shrouded in secrecy and drama. For example, only “[a] few gray-haired men and women here and there in the country could have told the strange story of Ramona” (27). While only a few people may remember the beginning of her story, which “was more than a half-century back” (26), the narrator stresses that “the story was not one to be forgotten; and now and then it was told in the twilight of a summer evening, or in the shadows of vines on a lingering afternoon, and all young men and maidens thrilled who heard it” (27). The fact that her story is repeated like a campfire tale, at

“twilight” and in the “shadows of vines” affirms how Ramona’s history, is a combination of fact and fantasy. The “twilight” and the “shadows of vines” reveal the romantic and fantastic elements associated with fairy tales. Ramona’s father, Angus Phail, a “well-born” Scotsman, married her mother, “a squaw with several Indian children” (29), after his true love, Señora Moreno’s older sister, Ramona Gonzaga, broke her promise to marry him. Twenty-five years later Angus pays a surprise visit to Ramona Gonzaga, Señora Ortega now, asking her to care for his baby, a daughter whom he named after her. Señora Ortega, childless, which the narrator, Angus, and the Señora, believe is a punishment from God, agrees to care for the child and raise her as her own. As we uncover later in the chapter, however, when Señora Ortega’s husband, Francis, an abusive man drunkenly discovers the new baby, he calls her an ““Indian brat”” (31). From this initial racist moment, Señora Ortega hides the baby and carefully “[keeps] and [tends her] in apartments where there was no danger of her being seen by the man to whom the sight of her baby face was only a signal for anger and indecency” (32). Therefore, an air of mystery and fantasy frames our understanding of Ramona, who has not only been concealed from Señor Ortega for her own safety but also from readers who are required to “get through” the history of California and the Moreno rancho before learning about the title character.

The novel pits Señora Moreno against Ramona when the narrator explains that Ramona is more important than the Señora because she “was of the past; Ramona was of the present” (26). This dialectal pairing of Señora Moreno and Ramona establishes a tension between the past and present, old Spain and new world mestizaje,

respectively¹⁶. We learn that while the Señora has cared for Ramona, she does not love her and intentionally conceals and perhaps tries to forget how Ramona came to live with the Morenos because of her own racism against indigenous people. In other words, like many American westward expansionists, the Señora would like to ignore the fact that “[t]his land was Mexican once, was Indian always” (Anzaldúa 25)¹⁷. For example, when Angus dies, Ramona is barely a year old and he sends a box of jewels to Señora Ortega hoping that his remaining fortune will ensure that his daughter’s future is not impoverished. Señora Ortega not only agrees to respect Angus’s final wishes, but also enlists her sister’s, Señora Moreno, help to “put the box into her keeping as a sacred trust” (32). As we know, Señora Moreno’s prejudices make it hard for her to honor her sister’s wishes, especially when Señora Ortega dies and asks Señora Moreno to raise Ramona as her own daughter. According to the narrator, Señora Moreno “did not wish any dealings with such alien and mongrel blood” (32-33). Three years later, after suffering at the hands of her abusive husband, Señora Ortega dies but not before sending for her sister to ensure that her fortune, along with Angus’s jewels, be taken to the Moreno rancho, away from Señor Ortega’s greedy grasp. As the narrator concludes Ramona’s origin story, we learn that at the time of the novel’s setting, Ramona is nineteen and not any closer to being in Señora Moreno’s favor. However, we also learn that the Señora’s son, Felipe starts to see Ramona as an attractive woman and not just his younger “sister”; he will later form one third of the novel’s main love triangle: Felipe falls in love Ramona, who does not believe she is beautiful enough for him because of her indigenous features: dark,

thick, and straight hair (44), falls in love with Alessandro, an indigenous man from the Temecula tribe.

When Alessandro arrives on the Moreno property, Ramona is busy mending an altar-cloth that Margarita, a maid and former nurse to Ramona, accidentally damaged. Later, Margarita, because of her own internalized racism and jealousy, turns against Ramona when she discovers that Felipe loves Ramona, and that Ramona loves Alessandro. While Ramona mends the torn lace, the narrator describes her in an almost saint-like fashion: “[t]he sunset beams played around her hair like a halo; the whole place was aglow with red light, and her face was kindled into transcendent beauty” (50). Suddenly, though, “[a] sound arrest[s] her attention ... [it is] the band of Indian shearers” (50). The fact that these indigenous laborers abruptly disrupted the Catholic, saintly image of Ramona foreshadows Ramona’s dormant mestiza consciousness and her budding, and then doomed, relationship with Alessandro. She is the daughter of an unknown and forgotten indigenous woman despite the fact that she has been raised with land-owning Californios and she will leave this “civilized” rancho behind to live with Alessandro’s people in Temecula. However, Ramona maintains one physical feature that cements her ability to access the “civilized” world she leaves behind: her Scottish father’s blue eyes and these blue eyes resurface later in her and Alessandro’s daughter.

As for Alessandro, the narrator describes him in typical nineteenth-century racist fashion: he is “concealed behind a large willow-tree” (51) and when he catches the light coming from Ramona, “[h]e halt[s], as wild creatures of the forest halt at a

sound; gaz[ing]” (51) at her. Hidden by the trees is a typical trope of nineteenth- and eighteenth-century American literature as historian Philip Deloria details in his book, *Playing Indian* (1998)¹⁸. In the introduction, Deloria explains that “[s]avage Indian served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self. Coded as freedom, however, wild Indian proved equally attractive, setting up a “have-the-cake-and-eat-it-too” dialectic of simultaneous desire and repulsion” (Deloria 3). This dialectical relationship between an indigenous and American identity is at the heart of the novel because Ramona’s indigeneity is something she grapples with, and she ultimately develops a hybridized identity. After Alessandro is murdered, Ramona returns to the Moreno rancho to raise her indigenous daughter with Felipe. As mentioned before, to make the transition into “civilization” easier and more palatable to outsiders, those Scottish blue eyes are present in her daughter.

Building on the rhetorical strategy of making the story more palatable to audiences invested in a romance, the novel goes into great detail explaining how Alessandro and Ramona first take notice of each other through music. For example, the narrator has already described Ramona’s voice as “low and sweet as the twilight notes of the thrush” (41), highlighting her seemingly “natural” connection to the landscape around her. Alessandro, too, is musically gifted; he “inherited his father’s love and talent for music” (54). In fact, when Ramona hears his singing, she considers the sound of his voice to be “from another world” (55). Further, this other worldly music “[penetrates] her consciousness with a subtle thrill almost like pain” (55). The

fact that music introduces the two young lovers is already an interesting element to their romance story. Moreover, the fact that his singing *penetrates* Ramona's "consciousness" (55) alludes to their inevitable pairing. However, as we continue to learn about Alessandro, his father, "Chief Pablo had not done his son any good by trying to make him like white men" (56). Thus, for Alessandro, too, he occupies a liminal position, like his father, the chief, in title only, as his people's lands and rights have been stripped away. On the one hand, Alessandro is a young, 21-year-old, indigenous man, who has learned to read, which, according to the narrator has made him "distant [and] cold" to "his own people of the Temecula village" (56). On the other hand, this assimilation has not served him well because "[t]he Americans would not let an Indian do anything but plough and sow and herd cattle. A man need not read and write, to do that" (56). Although the narrator offers this criticism of American treatment of American Indians, the narrator also falls into another example of racist language when, in the following paragraph, the narrator explains how Alessandro's father "was, for one of his race, wise and farseeing" (56). In other words, father and son occupy a unique and liminal position as educated men in positions of power. However, their race continues to mark them as other, inferior, and non-white Americans.

In fact, although Alessandro knows well that his place is not as a member of the Moreno family but as an indigenous laborer working for them, he does not act on his feelings for Ramona at first, believing that she is married to Felipe, the Moreno heir. Not until Felipe has an accident and falls ill and Alessandro offers to help soothe

him by playing him music, does he learn that Felipe and Ramona are not married. As they both care for Felipe, Ramona and Alessandro begin their romance, despite her own internalized racism. For example, when Alessandro pays for his violin to be brought to the Moreno rancho from Temecula to play it for Felipe, “[f]or the first time, [Ramona] look[s] at him with no thought of his being an Indian—a thought there had surely been no need of her having, since his skin was not a shade darker than Felipe’s; but so strong was the race feeling, that never till that moment had she forgotten it” (81). Noticeably, Ramona, due to her private and elite education, has assimilated and internalized a Californio identity, ignoring her own indigenous identity. She is, thus, is taken off guard when the ever-present “race feeling” disappears at the Alessandro’s candor at refusing payment from Señora Moreno to pay the messenger who brought the violin. When Ramona relays this episode to a convalescing Felipe, he explains simply that “[h]e is as proud as Lucifer himself, that Alessandro” (84). Of course, again, likening Alessandro’s pride to Lucifer is only one of the many examples of normalized racism not only of the novel but also of the nineteenth century.

After this conversation with Felipe, his mother, Señora Moreno, interrupts to reproach Ramona (a daily occurrence) and Felipe asks for Ramona to bring Alessandro to his room so that he may play his violin for Felipe to fall asleep. While in search of Felipe, Ramona, “looking down the garden, she thought she saw figures moving under the willows by the washing-stones” (85). The two figures are Margarita and Alessandro. Recalling that the first moment we see Alessandro, he is watching

Ramona while “concealed behind a large willow-tree” (51), these two moments are interestingly linked. The landscape of this scene helps us map how the social markers of class, gender, and race are at play because Ramona is literally looking down at Margarita and Alessandro, who are hidden under the willows. As we soon learn, Margarita, interested in Alessandro, has invited him to meet with her secretly in the trees to convey her feelings to him. Although he does not reciprocate those feelings, Ramona misinterprets the two young people as two lovers.

As I briefly mentioned at the beginning of this section, this scene serves as one of the main catalysts for the deterioration of the friendship between Margarita and Ramona. When Ramona approaches the two, she sees, “Alessandro, standing with his back against the fence, his right hand hanging listlessly down, with the pruning-knife in it, his left hand in the hand of Margarita, who stood close to him, looking up at his face, with a half-saucy, half-loving expression” (88). In this quotation, we see the narrator giving all the action to Margarita: she invites Alessandro to meet her and she is the one looking at him. For Alessandro, on the other hand, the narrator portrays him as trapped, backed against a gate, with a knife in his hand, which remains unclear whether or not he might use it against Margarita. This violent possibility stems from Alessandro’s reaction to seeing Ramona observe him and Margarita: he “snatch[es] his hand from Margarita’s, and trie[s] to draw farther off from her, looking at her with an expression which, even in her anger, Ramona could not help seeing it [is] one of disgust and repulsion” (89). Later he escalates his visceral reaction by exclaiming to himself, “May the fiends get her!”

(89). Margarita is the villain who is getting in the way of the budding romance audiences are rooting for: Ramona and Alessandro.

Moreover, we cannot ignore that the young, Mexican maid is vilified. Intentional or not, there is a pattern of the novel using nature, such as willow trees, to conceal or absorb non-white individuals. In this example, the trees hide Margarita, the Mexican maid and Alessandro, the indigenous laborer. We must also remember that Ramona is also concealed in the novel but not via nature. She is concealed first within the walls of the Ortega household, keeping her safe from her adoptive mother's abusive and racist husband, Señor Ortega. Later, she is a quiet, obedient, and silent member of the Moreno rancho, only noticed through her singing, which as previously mentioned, is saintly and therefore, otherworldly, and her beauty, which is gazed upon, rendering her a beautiful object. While these indoor and outdoor spaces function differently, they work to conceal what is not desired or understood: an unassimilable and "uncivilized" Mexican maid, an indigenous sheepshearer, and a mixed-race woman of mysterious origin.

After this scandalous moment in the shade of the trees, Alessandro frantically tries to explain what happened, but he is at a loss for words. This loss of words represents an almost telepathic, perhaps spiritual, connection between Alessandro and Ramona when she "discovered that she knew all he wished to say" (91-92). And Alessandro, once he hears that she believes him, he "[feels] for the first time, a personal relation between himself and her" (91-92). This emotional moment marks

another development in the blossoming forbidden romance between the two young people. However, their growing love does not go unnoticed.

Several chapters later, on one of her walking inspections of the property, Señora Moreno comes across Alessandro and Ramona sharing a romantic moment, which enrages her, most likely because of her anti-indigenous prejudices. Importantly, this private moment between Alessandro and Ramona takes place on the washing stones, the same place as previously discussed where Margarita tried to share a kiss with Alessandro. The narrator describes how the Señora makes her way down to the willows, next to the washing stones, until she came:

face to face with a man and a woman standing locked in each other's arm, she halted, stepped back a pace, gave a cry of surprise, and, in the same second, recognized the faces of the two, who, stricken dumb, stood apart, each gazing into her face with terror. (Jackson 121)

The person holding all the power in this scene is the Señora, who is on her daily walk to inspect her property, and who now strikes fear in the hearts of Alessandro and Ramona as evidence by their “gazing into her face with terror” (121). In this passage, the novel returns to the dialectical pairing of Ramona and the Señora. For example, instead of Ramona catching Margarita and Alessandro, we have the Señora catching Ramona with Alessandro. However, unlike Ramona who is consumed with jealousy and pain, the Señora is consumed with fear and racism. Señora Moreno witnesses the possibility of a new indigenous generation in the consummation of Ramona's and Alessandro's love, a possibility that horrifies her. Consequently, the Señora locks up Ramona in her room and fires Alessandro on the spot; Alessandro leaves to come back, prepared to take Ramona away as his wife. The Señora, thinking that she will

hurt and embarrass Ramona with the truth about her indigenous identity, is not prepared for what this truth does to Ramona. Now she knows that her father, Angus Phail, left her to be raised by the Señora Ortega, Phail's true love. Moreover, the Señora tells Ramona of the small fortune her father and adopted mother left for her; her indigenous mother, though, remains unnamed. Ramona, however surprised, is not interested in the small fortune of jewels, but in learning who her mother is. To this the Señora responds with disdain to Ramona that "[her] mother was an Indian. Everybody knew that!" (143). The more the Señora reveals to Ramona about her origin story, the more their dialectical relationship transforms. The narrator states, for example, that the Señora "found herself constrained by Ramona's imperious earnestness, and she chafed under it. The tables were being turned on her, she hardly knew how. Ramona seemed to tower in stature, and to have the bearing of the one in authority, as she stood pouring out passionate question after question" (144). Soon after this moment, a newly developed sense of self flourishes and helps Ramona finally leave the Moreno rancho behind and seek out a future with her promised husband, Alessandro of the Temecula village. Before taking refuge there, the narrator explains that Ramona wants to wait until they are in the wilderness to declare her love for him; however, the reality is that the wilderness is fleeting; the indigenous are being wiped out; and their love story is a tragic one that is fleeting.

Because their window for love is so short, Ramona takes this opening, risking everything, to meet up with Alessandro. When she does, she surprises him, and he mistakes her for "an Indian woman toiling along under a heavy load" (208). After the

initial surprise and before the chapter closes, Ramona insists that Alessandro call her by “[t]he Indian name,—the name of the dove” (211). For the first time in her life, she embraces and reclaims her indigeneity because, for so long, Señora Moreno had intentionally hidden the truth from her, deeming her indigenous heritage unworthy of being affirmed, lowly, and uncivilized. Then, Ramona takes this naming process one step further by adjusting the name to suit her; she explains to Alessandro that she “would like [Majel] better [as] Majella” (211). We first learn of this name when Alessandro is wandering the property, feeling poorly after the Señora caught him and Ramona in an embrace under the willows. While he is walking, he hears a pair of doves cooing and their “notes...comforted him” (134). He associates the cooing with Ramona, who he thinks of as, “the gentle wood-dove” (134). Further, Alessandro expands this romantic gesture to include the Temecula people by saying that “if [Ramona becomes his] wife [his] people will call her Majel, the Wood-Dove” (134). Readers are riveted because of the romance story of a young couple that has so many dreams for a future that will never come.

Indeed, the last place Alessandro and Majella are truly happy is in the shelter of the cañon, the scene I briefly mentioned at the beginning of this section. They only stay here for two nights while hiding from the Señora’s men, who have been charged with bringing Ramona back to the rancho right after she runs away to join Alessandro. Even though they are there for only a short period of time:

the place had become to Ramona so like a friendly home, that she dreaded to leave its shelter. Nothing is stronger proof of the original intent of Nature to do more for man than civilization in its arrogance will long permit her to do, than the quick and sure way in which she reclaims his affection, when by

weariness, idle chance, or disaster, he is returned, for an interval, to her arms.
(Jackson 225)

Nature is feminized in the passage, a common nineteenth-century gendered rhetorical move that Annette Kolodny traces in her foundational text, *Lay of the Land:*

Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters (1975). Kolodny explains that:

America's oldest and most cherished fantasy: a daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine—that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification—enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction.
(Kolodny 4).

Therefore, the scene in the cañon is a clear example of the “daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine,” (4). The wilderness provides Ramona with hospitality, a typically feminine duty, and embraces her and Alessandro, her prodigal children returned, in “her [loving] arms” (Jackson 225). An important note that while Nature embraces man without question, this reconnection is only temporary, yet another example of a fleeting experience in the novel, because it seems that only by “weariness, idle chance, or disaster, [does man return], for an interval” (225). This unconditional love and support contributes to “America's oldest and most cherished fantasy” (Kolodny 4). I emphasize the word “fantasy” because “Nature,” here, is the result of Jackson's vision of California, a unique place where romance, adventure, and history are part of daily life.

Finally, as the novel comes to a close, Ramona is widowed a few years after she and Alessandro left the protection of the canon. Alessandro is murdered by,

Farrar, a white settler, who claims self-defense and gets away with the killing. Felipe, who has always been in love with Ramona, rescues her from a life of poverty among the indigenous people in Temecula village, and the two decide to go south of the new border to Mexico.

Pushing the fantasy heritage of California beyond the United States, the novel imagines that along the border that sutures together Mexico and the United States, there is “ample [space] for the realization of all [Felipe’s] plans for the new life in Mexico” (388). Ramona also shares with Felipe that her “most beautiful dream for Ramona would be, that she should grow up in Mexico” (387). Mexico has “kindled ...[Ramona’s] imagination” and there “she would embrace and conquer [a future] for her daughter” (388). Interestingly, the two verbs, “embrace” and “conquer,” are paradoxically connected, making it hard to believe that such a future is even possible; however, this harder-to-believe future fits perfectly with the fantasy heritage tradition. Then, the narrator, through Felipe’s perspective, reveals that Ramona wants her daughter, her namesake, to be spared “the burden she had gladly, heroically borne ...in the bond of race” (387). Mexico seems to provide the space for more nuanced race relations; however, let us not be mistaken and believe that Mexico is without its own set of complicated racial and ethnic relationships, especially in terms of anti-indigenous and anti-black racist prejudices.

Although the novel attempts to bring to awareness the plight of the Native American in the United States, the very mode of communicating these serious charges romance story unintentionally sabotages her cause with her. The novel fails

to escape the trappings of whiteness and the power of white supremacy, even in non-white families, like the Morenos. In the next section, Ruiz de Burton understands the importance of assimilation in order to ensure survival under shifting governments.

Californios, Citizenship, and Contestations over the Landscape

The second California landscape I will be exploring in this chapter is one that María Amparo Ruiz de Burton details in her 1885 novel, *The Squatter and the Don*. Similar to Jackson's attention to the plight of the oppressed, Ruiz de Burton narrates the Alamar family's struggle with the loss of their land and wealth. Ruiz de Burton, herself from a wealthy Californio family, married Henry S. Burton—a U.S. Captain in the U.S.-Mexican War—after the war in order to secure the family's holdings. For Ruiz de Burton, though, the novel better understands and the more explicitly embraces whiteness as a means of assimilation as a means of survival. However, Burton, an avid gambler, squandered most of their money, forcing Amparo Ruiz to pursue a career as a writer¹⁹. Ruiz de Burton narrates this family's struggles by foregrounding the problem of the failed 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; the Treaty failed because the terms of the settlement were not upheld. Richard Griswold del Castillo explains this failure in his book, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* by stating that “[w]ith an arrogance born of superior military, economic, and industrial power, the United States virtually dictated the terms of the settlement” which “established a pattern of inequality between the two countries, and this lopsided relationship has influenced Mexican-American relations ever since” (xii). The Treaty was a settlement that was intended to establish not equality, but a

new territory dominated by contentious relations as the United States absorbed new land and people under its control.

Returning to this 1848 moment of failure, Ruiz de Burton, a generation removed from its signing, returns to the Treaty but *indirectly* in 1885 at the time of the novel's publication. The Treaty never surfaces in the novel; we only gain an understanding of the aftermath of the Treaty through an intimate view of the Alamar family's struggle with the loss of their land and wealth. Because Ruiz de Burton writes from the setting of a fractured California, she forces her readers to return to the Treaty itself, making it a relevant and *living* document, so that they may investigate its limits and question and revise its overall failure. Ruiz de Burton therefore narrates the Treaty as a moment of failure by re-reading it through her main character, Don Maríano, the head of the Alamar family. Writing from a moment of fracture—a breaking of old geopolitical boundaries and the forming of new ones—implores the question: What is at stake in narrating a failure? Ruiz de Burton makes it clear that the counter narratives, our histories, are key because they serve both as a counter to the Treaty and to reject the idea that we must consume U.S. history as a transparent collection of facts.

Ruiz de Burton uses this return to a re-reading of the Treaty as a lens through which she highlights the ruptures and contradictions of the Treaty but notably without quoting from it directly, forcing her readers to return to the document on their own. This return to the document grants her readers agency to understand for themselves the aftermath of the Treaty not only in 1885 but today. Ruiz de Burton chooses to

have Don Mariano speak English throughout the novel. He is a new citizen and speaking English as a new U.S. citizen legitimizes his interpretation of the Treaty; his interpretation, which is really Ruiz de Burton's critique of the Treaty, serves as a counter narrative that raises issues of citizenship, language, and property ownership not only in the novel but also the Treaty. Therefore, this counter narrative is calculated, and Ruiz de Burton creates what Anderson called an *imagined community*. She is the overarching interlocutor in the novel connecting her readers with the Treaty. Thus, every time a new audience reads the Treaty, they re-engage with the Treaty and her interpretation of it, which perpetuates a cycle of rebirth for the counter narrative in which audiences have the chance to continue question the Treaty and its implications for their current political state.²⁰ Anderson defines nation "as an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). His definition of nation as an imagined community is not only useful in conceptualizing the Californio community Ruiz de Burton creates in her novels but also how this imagined community is complicated by another nation's imagined community: the United States. Using Anderson's concept of an imagined community, I will analyze the implications of the juxtaposition of Mexico and the United States after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.²¹

I return to Ruiz de Burton to establish a counter reading of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the chapter, "The Don's View of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo." Here, Don Mariano re-reads the Treaty when he explains that the:

treaty said that our rights would be the same as those enjoyed by all other American citizens. But, you see, Congress takes very good care not to enact

retroactive laws for Americans, laws to take away from American citizens the property which they hold now, already, with a recognized legal title. No, indeed. But they do so quickly enough with us--with us, the Spano-Americans, who were to enjoy equal rights, mind you, according to the treaty of peace. This is what seems to be a breach of faith, which Mexico could neither presuppose nor prevent. (Ruiz de Burton 65)

Ruiz de Burton transfers her implied views of the Treaty to her readers through the Don. Moreover, the fact that he is speaking English, while exposing the “treaty of peace[’s]” failure, a move that is both brave and polarizing, demonstrates how contested the politics of language are in the novel. The Don is a native Spanish speaker who has had to learn English, as a way to navigate the ever-changing landscape and the fact that this native Spanish speaker critiques a legal document, written in English, is no coincidence.

Ruiz de Burton uses the Don to expose the limits of the legal, English, language of the Treaty. The Treaty is not re-written in the text signaling that her re-reading that she develops throughout the novel is more crucial. Furthermore, she alerts her audience to the fact that if she can return to the Treaty, it is also available for them to seek out and re-read; therefore, establishing that their interpretations and their re-readings could serve as valid counter-narratives. Even today, in my return to the Treaty, it is obvious that although Article IX of the Treaty guarantees that the Alamar family’s “rights [as] citizens of the United States, according to the principles of the Constitution; [...] shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and secured in the free exercise of their religion without restriction,” (Treaty), Ruiz de Burton demonstrates through Don Mariano’s re-reading that these rights were not upheld. We are reminded of the language of the Treaty and

how at the time of the novel's publication, the Treaty continues to fail to meet its terms. Ruiz de Burton reads and revises the Treaty largely through the aegis of Spanish speakers, specifically Don Mariano, whose very language addresses one of the glaring omissions in the Treaty: the question of language and national belonging (identity).

The Treaty's temporality, a strange languaging of time, contributes to these glaring omissions. Don Mariano explains in his assessment that "Congress takes very good care not to enact retroactive laws for Americans, laws [that would] take away from American citizens the property which they hold now" (Ruiz de Burton 65). These "retroactive" laws serve to benefit the U.S. and create a sense that in terms of *its* citizens, the United States is outside of time, securing its power, established in the Treaty, forever. When it comes to its newest citizens, though, the Treaty languages time in such a way that is as specific as it is vague. Article VIII of the Treaty stipulates that:

Mexicans *now* established in territories *previously* belonging to Mexico, and which *remain* for the *future* within the limits of the United States, as defined by the *present* treaty, *shall* be free to continue where they *now* reside, or to remove at *any time* to the Mexican Republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories, or disposing thereof, and removing the proceeds wherever they please, without their being subjected, on this account, to any contribution, tax, or charge whatever.
(Article VIII, Treaty, emphasis added)

Therefore, these new citizens, referred to still as *Mexicans*, not Americans, are presently living on land that *previously* belonged to Mexico but in some unclear *future*, the United States guarantees that they "*shall* be free to continue where they with her novel and, arguably, this future has yet to arrive today.

However, so as not to employ an overtly aggressive tone, and possibly alienate herself from her American audience, Ruiz de Burton uses the Don to remove some of the blame from Congress. Don Marano explains that “Congress itself did not anticipate the effect of its laws upon us and how we would be despoiled, we, *the conquered people*” (66, emphasis added). It is almost as if the breaking of the Treaty is inevitable. Thus, Ruiz de Burton treads a fine line between being overtly critical of the Treaty and simply describing the events as inevitable through her re-reading. This balancing act is evident in the scene where Don Marano ends his critique of the Treaty by saying to his daughter “But don’t let me, *with my disagreeable subject*, spoil your dance” (66). Don Marano is aware of how contentious the subject of the Treaty is, but it seems as if he would rather not *mix business with pleasure*. Pleasant or not, though, the critique has already been made and Ruiz de Burton has already established the importance of returning to the Treaty to gain a better understanding of the context of the novel. Ruiz de Burton, then, succeeds in highlighting the need to return to the Treaty because of the Don’s interpretations but doing so in such a way that is as passive and inoffensive as possible. She delivers a calculated critique because she is writing as an English-American novel as the first Mexican-American woman to do so.

Ruiz de Burton’s calculated critique that establishes that the multiple language politics, which speak to citizenship and property ownership, are both competing and contradictory appears again when Don Marano holds a meeting to address the squatters on his land. The scene reads:

‘If you don’t understand me I will repeat my words until I make my meaning clear, but I hope you will ask me to repeat them; or perhaps, some one of these young gentleman will do me the kindness to be my interpreter,’ said [Don Maríano].

‘Romeo talks Spanish; he can interpret for you,’ said Victoriano.”

‘You talk English better,’ Romeo proudly replied, thinking he could tell his wife that the Don had asked him to be his interpreter.

‘Perhaps Mr. Clarence Darrell would do me the favor,’ said Don Maríano.

‘You speak very good English, Señor. We understand you perfectly. You do not require an interpreter,’ Clarence said.

‘That is so; you speak very well,’ said Mr. Mechlin.

Gasbang and Pittikin added: ‘Certainly, we understand him very well.’

‘You are very kind,’ said the Don, smiling, ‘and I will try to be brief, and not detain you long.’ (Ruiz de Burton 86)

The scene demonstrates how critically the notion of citizenship is tied with language.

After the signing of the 1848 Treaty, Mexicans living to the north of the new U.S.-

Mexico border were considered U.S. citizens; therefore, the treaty brought a new

national identity to them. Don Maríano’s hesitancy in his new role as the American

(*Californio*) landowner is clear when he apologizes for his English before addressing

the men. Ruiz de Burton, although highlighting his uncertainty, shows how Don

Maríano has no reason to “[excuse] himself for not speaking English more fluently”

(86) because as Clarence reminds him, ““You speak very good English, Señor. We understand you perfectly. You do not require an interpreter”” (86).

In this moment of reassurance, however, the white son of a squatter assures Don Maríano, which is a move that could be and has been dismissed as Ruiz de Burton’s racial assimilationist position. Yet, Ruiz de Burton uses Clarence, the white gentleman, as a pawn to legitimize Don Maríano. She elevates Don Maríano to a “gentleman” status; he is the white gentleman’s equal, but this elevation moves up a

slippery slope as she attempts to capitalize on the value of whiteness, a topic I will address later in this section.

The other gentleman present is Mr. Mechlin, who except Clarence, is the only one who refers to the act of addressing the men as *speaking* and not *talking*, as Romeo and Victoriano do. Furthermore, the fact that Don Maríano *chooses* Clarence to be his interpreter demonstrates his agency. After Don Maríano's son, Victoriano suggests that Romeo be his translator because he "talks Spanish" (86), Don Maríano ignores this suggestion and instead says, "Perhaps Mr. Clarence Darrell would do me the favor" (86). Don Maríano addresses Clarence by way of a formality and even adds "would do me the favor" contributing to the formal, gentlemanly tone. Ruiz de Burton continues elevating the Don when she describes how throughout this scene, the Don is apologetic, formal and "smiling" (86). Ruiz de Burton makes it clear, through language that the Don is a gentleman, but she does so in such a way that highlights an insecurity of language and ultimately citizenship because the Don first apologizes for his English. Moreover, during a moment when we think that the Don may react emotionally to the group of squatters, he simply "redden[s] with a thrill of annoyance, but quietly answer[s]" (87); he maintains his gentleman status by censoring himself. This censorship is simply an example of Ruiz de Burton's balancing act of storytelling while narrating a historical failure.

The Don's preservation of English and censorship of his emotions are types of silencing that are evident in the Treaty because the Treaty assumes English as the language of the new citizens, but the novel anatomizes the assumption that they are

English speakers. The unspoken assumption, then, is tantamount to the loss of Spanish of different types of citizens; Spanish only comes out during moments of racializing language which defines white U.S. citizens as those *possessing* the lingua franca, English, and by default, the Treaty. Whereas those “new citizens,” the previously Mexican citizens, must learn English and, like the Don, quiet their native Spanish in order to quiet doubts of loyalty to a new government and ensure what John Moran Gonzales refers to as “Californio whiteness” (Moran Gonzales 99). This begs the question: who is allowed to speak Spanish in the novel? As the previous example shows, the Don, in a gentlemanly fashion, apologizes for his English but he does not speak Spanish. In fact, the Don, Clarence, Mr. Mechlin, and George, the Don’s son-in-law, are the only characters that speak the grammatically correct English. Ruiz de Burton, thus, elevates the Don to the level of the white gentleman through his use of English and his *performance* of white male gentleman identity. As for the other white gentleman present, they do not and are not expected to go through a performance of an apology for their English; their English and their white gentleman identity is taken at face value, no questions asked or expected. Ruiz de Burton privileges the white gentlemen to use Spanish while the Don maintains English. Yet, while she privileges their appropriation of Spanish, they cannot escape the task of learning a new language. Although English is the new lingua franca and the new U.S. citizens must learn it, their white counterparts (the current U.S. citizens) must also endure the change by learning Spanish. Ruiz de Burton makes it a point that the Don never utters

a word of Spanish, suggesting his fluency in English whereas the white gentlemen only use Spanish sparingly meaning their *lack* of a command of the language.

To further complicate the language politics of the novel, the chapter “The Squatter and the Don” offers another example of the connections between language and citizenship. In this chapter, there are “two Indian *vaqueros*” who believe that “for sport Don Gabriel had thrown the *lazo* on the old squatter. Having come to this conclusion, they began to shout and hurrah with renewed vigor” (Ruiz de Burton 231). The presence of Indian *vaqueros* complicates not only my previous question of who is allowed to speak Spanish in the novel but also my idea that it seems as if only the white gentleman landowners speak Spanish. The Indian *vaqueros* complicate this conclusion because not only are they speaking Spanish but they are also speaking Spanish in the presence of other Spanish speakers. They create a familiar and exclusionary linguist community in which only the Spanish speakers understand each other as is evident in the following:

“*¡Apa! Viejo escuata o cabestreas o te orcas,*” cried one.

“*No le afloje patroncito Gabriel,*” said the other.

Now the ground being very rough, Darrell began to sway, as if losing his balance.

“*¡Apriete, Viejo! Apriete, miralo! Ya se ladea!*” cried again one *vaquero*.

“*Creo que el viejo escuata va chispo,*” said the other.

“*Que es eso? A que vienen aca? Quien los convida? Callense la boca, no sean malcriados, vayanse!*” said Victoriano, turning to them in great indignation. (Ruiz de Burton 231)

Ruiz de Burton adds to this limited linguistic community because she offers no translation of the scene and without the translation that Sanchez and Pita offer, non-Spanish speakers would be left out of a type of open dialogue, or what Warner calls a

“feedback loop” (Warner 70), because only Spanish speakers would be able to reference and reflect upon this scene²². However, since Sanchez and Pit do offer a translation, it is important to understand how they identify Ruiz de Burton’s “*escuata*” as a “Spanish loan word for ‘squatter’” (footnote 44, 350). The meaning of “loan word” is clearly not a reference to capital exchange nor does it imply that the word will be *returned*; however, the connotation of exchange does correlate to a form of *cultural exchange*, which is interesting in regard to the implications of the connection between the U.S. and Mexico. If Ruiz de Burton, who learns English as a second language, maintains Spanish in this scene, why does she use a *loan word*? I believe that this linguistic moment could be one way that Ruiz de Burton is developing a social commentary on the U.S.’s annexation of Mexico, highlighting the fact that there is no word in her Spanish vocabulary that carries the same significance as the English “squatter” which implies that this idea of squatting on someone else’s land is a “U.S. American” concept.

Moreover, even though the Indian vaqueros are shouting in support of their *patron* and Victoriano speaks back to them in Spanish in a type of intra-cultural exchange, there are some clear tensions at work in this scene because Victoriano does not engage with them in an open “feedback loop” but uses Spanish to silence them, terminating the intra-cultural exchange. Therefore, although one could argue that Ruiz de Burton through bilingualism is actively resisting an English-only hegemonic narrative, we should remember Jose Aranda’s suggestion from his 1998 essay to acknowledge that Ruiz de Burton “uphold[s] racial and colonialist discourses that

contradict the ethos of the Chicano Movement” (Aranda 554). In this scene, Ruiz de Burton perpetuates racial hierarchies because the Indian vaqueros that are speaking Spanish are completely alienated from their native language, which may not be Spanish. Thus, they are speaking in their colonizer’s language, Spanish, and are being admonished in this language even though they are using it create solidarity with their employers. Their loyalty is not enough to erase their low-ranking racial and social positions. Therefore, Aranda pushes for us to:

mov[e] scholarship beyond counter-nationalist arguments that conceive Chicano/a culture and history in strict opposition to U.S. and Western cultures by insisting on the need to formulate histories and analyses that place some people of Mexican descent at the center of discourses more typically associated with Anglo America. (Aranda 554)

We cannot hope to identify Ruiz de Burton simply as one of the first “U.S. Latina” (Pita) writers because that is our present-day pressure and would oversimplify this complex historical figure. My question, then, is how then do we account for Ruiz de Burton’s unstable identity? Aranda explains that historian Lisbeth Haas “offers no moral judgment about Ruiz de Burton’s character, ethnic loyalties, or the opportunities that life presented her; she was who she was” (560). It seems that, although difficult to do given the excitement of recovering such influential figures, we must resist the urge to push our presentist agendas on historical figures because we risk failing to recognize the contributions they made in the context of their specific place and time.

In an effort to continue exploring the novel’s important contributions, let me refer back to a point I raised earlier: the novel’s value of whiteness as a means of

assimilation and survival. Amidst the detailing of injustices perpetuated by the U.S. government against the *Californios*, the novel also takes the time to criticize Mexico. This criticism, which takes on a gendered theme, occurs when Don Mariano reflects on how “when [he] first read the text of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, [he] felt a bitter resentment against my people; against Mexico, the mother country, who abandoned us—her children—with so slight a provision of obligatory stipulations for protection” (65). The Don frankly blames Mexico, “the mother country,” for not protecting “her children,” the Mexicans, who are now freshly minted Americans. However, as the Don concludes his reminiscence, he explains that “upon mature reflection, [he] saw Mexico did as much as could have been reasonably expected at the time” (65). We see the Don vacillate with his understanding and resentment of Mexico. Literary scholar, Annette Kolodny, mentioned last section, helps us understand this complicated relationship by explaining that:

to make the new continent Woman was already to civilize it a bit.... But, more precisely still, just as the impulse for emigration was an impulse to begin again (whether politically, economically, or religiously), so, too, the place of that new beginning was, in a sense, the new Mother, her adopted children having cast off the bonds of Europe, ‘where mother-country acts the step-dame’s part.’ (Kolodny 9)

As Kolodny illustrates, it was common practice to follow through with the impulse of creating a mother out of America. However, in the case of the Don, he has two mothers: his first mother, Mexico (the birthplace of the mestizo), and his new mother, America, who will reluctantly embrace “her adopted children,” the *Californios*, who represent a linguistic as well as a racial otherness that is not as easily stamped out as “the bonds of Europe” (Kolodny 9). I say reluctantly because Europe is farther away,

the length of an ocean, making it easier for Americans to develop a unique, American identity separate from Europe. However, with Mexico right next door, Californios and former Mexicans had a harder time developing an “American only” identity. Recalling how, in the last section, *Ramona*, offers Mexico as the setting of a new and better future, this moment of bitter resentment at Mexico is jarring. As we will see in the next chapter, *McTeague*, follows in *Ramona*’s literary footsteps by offering Mexico as a place of escape from the law.

One way that Ruiz de Burton empowers Don Maríano is through his own interpretation, making him an impartial judge rather than just her vessel of re-reading. Reading, understanding, and assessing the treaty in English demonstrates the Don’s advanced linguistic abilities. This ability to communicate well and effectively in English also represents how far down the path to assimilation and eventual *social* citizenship the Don has already come²³. Don Maríano does not criticize the squatters; he simply relays the fractures in the Treaty. During the moments where Don Maríano judiciously remarks on the current aftermath of the Treaty, he carefully judges the *situation* and does not “blame the squatters; they are at times like ourselves, victims of a wrong legislation, which unintentionally cuts both ways. [...] we are all sufferers, all victims of a defective legislation and subverted moral pictures” (74). In this moment, Ruiz de Burton creates a common ground between the former Mexican landowners and the squatters, both victims of the government; yet, he cannot do the same with his “people” (65), just pages before. Through his continued calm and collected reactions regarding the Treaty, the Don establishes his authority. Don

Mariano acknowledges that although the “Darrells occupy the land they selected, with [his] consent,” he tells his family: “‘I hope no one in my family will do them injustice to say that they have stolen our land, or that they are squatters,’ said Don Mariano *firmly*” (110, emphasis added). By establishing Don Mariano as the head of his household, Ruiz de Burton returns agency to him. She doubles his power through his interpretation of the Treaty for his family (and the readers) and his role as the head of his household, which is especially powerful during a time, as John Moran Gonzales confirms, “[d]ealing with an unfamiliar legal system in an unfamiliar language [often] proved disastrous for the land-rich but capital-poor Californios” (Moran Gonzales 95). One way to obtain capital is through the social capital of whiteness. For many, often wealthy, Californios, whiteness was the way to access this new socio-political wealth and citizenship under a new American government²⁴.

Through the Don’s re-reading, Ruiz de Burton allows herself the liberty of inserting into the novel her interpretations of the Treaty and its aftermath. In her role as narrator, she also inserts herself, in her present, into the text when she comments on the hopeful arrival of the Texas Pacific Railroad. Inserting herself into the text is a strategy that pushes us further back to the past of her past, the 1848 moment of failure in American history. She describes how “the mind had to be prepared--slowly educated first. Now it has been. The process began about that time and it has continued up to this day, this very moment in which I write this page. Mr. Huntington’s letters have taught us how San Diego was robbed, tricked, and cheated out of its inheritance. We will look at these letters further on” (159). Ruiz de Burton

sets the example for her readers to “look at [documents] further on” (159). She interpolates “Huntington’s letters” and alludes to the Treaty inviting her readers to return to the past to gain a better understanding of their present. During this moment of her return, she hints at the fact that the return process should never end since “it has continued to this day, this very moment in which I write this page” (159). This process of preparing the people for a railroad company mirrors her efforts to push her readers back to 1848; there are things to be learned from the Treaty, even today, and only by returning to it can we attempt to understand the present and the future. The Treaty and the issues it raises function like a residue, something that cannot be wiped away and ignored, something that will continue to surface both as a threat and promise of the future. Similar to how the truth of the issues that the Treaty raises will not be silenced, so does race persist in Frank Norris’s *McTeague: A Story of San Francisco* (1899), the topic of the next and final section of this chapter.

Exploring Clear and Present Race and Gender Relations within Norris’s Capitalist Critique

Reflecting on authors Ruiz de Burton and Jackson and their use of race makes clear how Norris’s use of race is drastically different. For example, on one hand Ruiz de Burton explores the question of race through the process of assimilation to a white American identity. On the other hand, for Jackson race is at the heart of her desire novel to highlight the struggles of indigenous peoples in California. For Norris, however, race seems to be distinct from something like capitalism or greed; race simply *colors* his novel, making it more “realistic,” as might the use of dialect.

Through an eco-intersectional framework, however, we know that class as a social marker intersects with race and gender. In other words, as a novel that explicitly engages issues of class, *McTeague* must perforce also deal with race and gender. In this section I will explore Norris's work through an eco-intersectional lens that highlights rather than occludes an analysis of the very clear, present, and mapped race and gender relations within the novel, which take place in San Francisco, the hills of Placer County, and Death Valley, California. I will also aim to shed light on some of Norris's nineteenth-century blind spots—particularly in regard to race and gender—in order to add nuance to his critique of capitalism. My goal is not to discourage the reading of or to discredit Norris's work by over-reliance on a presentist perspective, which would only serve to shut down and flatten out any useful insights we might glean from Norris's work. Instead, I hope to encourage a re-reading of this important critique of capitalism within its proper historical context and draw attention to the gaps that Norris opens for his contemporary audiences, especially in his presentation of race and gender. In other words, I hope to revisit and update Norris's critique of capitalism through a framework that highlights gender and racial inequalities, too.

In *McTeague*, California is seemingly raceless because Norris's major focus is the relationship between capitalism and greed. As a Naturalist, Norris adds details of race, which serve to paint a *realistic* portrayal of early San Francisco as is evident from the inclusion of explicitly ethnic characters María Macapa, the ambiguous Mexican from Central America, Zerkow, the red-haired Polish Jew, and Trina and her German-Swiss family—all of whom are presented as stereotypes. Race, in other

words, is solely used as a technique of realism. However, at the end of the novel in Death Valley, we are left only with McTeague, the fake dentist who failed in his attempts to achieve the American dream due to his own capitalistic greed. The landscape swallows McTeague—he is but a mere speck in the vast desert—and the other explicitly raced characters have died. For Norris, then, race functions merely as a marker of otherness while capitalism is the operative force behind American decline and devolution²⁵.

Because the novel downplays the importance of gender and race relations in favor of a critique of capitalism, the story purports to be about the former capital of the northern California gold rush, the city of San Francisco; as the subtitle tells us, the novel is a “story of San Francisco.” If McTeague is simply a foil for true American success, it makes sense that the only facts we know about McTeague include his surname, his stupidity, his brute strength, and his constant desire for more money. Perhaps Norris only gives us McTeague’s last name and elides the first because Norris is not writing a human-interest novel but rather an unrelenting critique of growing capitalism and greed within the United States, specifically within the state of California. His critique of rampant capitalist greed seems timely and justified with booming industrialism and “progress” politics ruling the country. However, although Norris launches this scathing critique of capitalism, he does not actually focus his critique upon capitalism itself; rather, he critiques the symptoms of capitalism, such as the deeply rooted desire to achieve the *American dream*, which we are still told we

can obtain if we only pull ourselves up by our bootstraps to work harder and chase more determinedly after money in an effort to climb the social (and classed) ladder²⁶.

Therefore, in order to attempt to understand and map Norris's California, the final section of this chapter examines four key scenes that seem to downplay race in nineteenth-century San Francisco, California, while at the same time invoking it. First, we will explore the animalistic descriptions of McTeague and his life on Polk Street. Next, we move onto one of the perhaps most overtly racist scenes in a novel that features zero black characters: the minstrel segment of a variety show that McTeague takes his date and future wife, Trina, her mother, and her youngest brother "Owgooste," (Norris 77) to see. Then, we take a moment to review the novel's creation of Maria Macapa, the "queer," "greaser" (18), who repeats a strange phrase each time she says her name, "'Maria—Miranda—Macapa'" and concludes this introduction with the phrase, "'had a flying squirrel an' let him go'" (19). Finally, the novel comes to a dramatic and painful end in the Mojave Desert, which is at once an inhospitable natural place that happens to provide a means of escape for McTeague from American authorities, and it is a death trap. The desert is at once facilitates McTeague's futile attempt to cross the desert in the hopes of escaping capture and it is oppressive in its emptiness. McTeague dies here; he does not escape the ocean that is the Mojave Desert. He dies in the borderlands handcuffed to his enemy, one-time best friend, Marcus Schouler, and his canary in a gilded cage, a strange object that has been present since the novel's beginning in the "Dental Parlors" on Polk Street.

The novel centers around McTeague, a fake dentist, who lives and works on Polk Street, an accommodation street, which is a center of lodging and shopping, an urban landscape in San Francisco. McTeague's best friend, who the narrator describes as his 'pal,' is Marcus Schouler, who eventually introduces McTeague to his cousin, Trina, McTeague's future, much to Marcus's ire. Before their following out, the two men live in the same apartment building and spend a lot of time together, eating, walking, and drinking. On the occasion that they are not together, Marcus spends time with his cousins, the Sieppes, a Swiss German immigrant family. Their eldest daughter is the aforementioned, Trina, who had up to her introduction to McTeague, been innocently flirting with Marcus. Marcus, however, did not take their time together too seriously until McTeague enters the picture; then his jealousy becomes the trigger that causes McTeague's and Trina's lives to crumble. Before Marcus's contribution to their terrible lives, Trina and McTeague play a hand in their eventual demise. McTeague's insatiable greed for money and buying things coupled with Trina's miserly tendencies only welcome trouble. The two eventually separate but not for long as McTeague arrives at Trina's new place of work: a children's daycare, where he murders her, takes her money, and escapes southward.

When the novel introduces us to its antagonist and namesake, McTeague, a fake dentist living on Polk Street, he is relaxing in his usual manner by sitting in his dentist's chair on a Sunday afternoon²⁷. He does not do much with his days except tend to his patients, specifically, pulling out their teeth with his bare hands; his brute strength is a topic to which I will later return. While McTeague plays the only six

notes he knows on his concertina, the narrator makes it clear that McTeague's position within the urban setting of San Francisco is precarious because of how easily he slips into nostalgia. He is not fully present in his reality and when he is, he *watches*—not participates in—the hustle and bustle of Polk Street from his bay window, and daydreams about acquiring a gilded tooth to advertise his dental services and replace his current, simple sign. As the narrator confirms, Polk Street “never failed to interest him. It was one of those cross streets peculiar to Western cities, situated in the heart of the residence quarter, but occupied by small tradespeople who lived in the rooms above their shops” (8). Like Jackson and Ruiz de Burton, here we see Norris, through the narrator, asserting how San Francisco is an example of the “peculiar...Western cities” (8), an example of American exceptionalism.

The melancholic concertina triggers memories of a past life at the mine, when we learn about McTeague's father and that “[e]very other Sunday he became an irresponsible animal, a beast, a brute, crazy with alcohol” (6). Then, the narrator establishes a parallel connection between father and son and their Sunday afternoon routines; McTeague's father was a man who made a habit out of getting drunk and violent. The narrator is priming the reader to look for similar traits in McTeague. Moreover, when tracing his family tree, the narrator introduces us to McTeague's mother, a cook at the mine, as a woman who was “filled with the one idea of having her son rise in life and enter a profession” (6). McTeague's escape from the mine came in the form of a “travelling dentist [who] visited the mine” (6). While this dentist “was more or less of a charlatan, ...but the fired Mrs. McTeague's ambition,

and young McTeague went away with him to learn his profession” (6). Importantly, it is his mother’s “fired...ambition” (6) that pushes him to follow in this man’s footsteps, not his own desire for advancement. The narrator further describes that although McTeague “had read many of the necessary books, ... he was too hopelessly stupid to get much benefit from them” (6). Therefore, as the narrator continues to detail his innate stupidity, we continue to lower our expectations of this character and he becomes an antagonist before our very eyes. Further, Norris details McTeague’s past not so much to give him depth as to plant a seed of skepticism for the audience. We are already suspicious of this man who the narrator describes as “hopelessly stupid” (6).

Through the experiences of his antagonist, McTeague, Norris narrates America’s decline into the underbelly of capitalism—greed being just one examples. Given the novel’s social-critical aims, we need an antagonist like McTeague, someone mediocre and somewhat unlikeable who, as a negative exemplum, can encourage readers to curb their growing greed lest they may suffer a similar ghastly death in the desert. McTeague is cautionary tale of the growing greed under capitalism in America. However, instead of tackling the inequitable power structures behind capitalism, Norris uses the most vulnerable—immigrants, women, and poor people—to critique the desire to attain the American dream. In other words, Norris almost seems to suggest that members of these vulnerable groups too stupid to know any better. And who better to inform (and entertain) the public than Norris himself, an

educated, wealthy, heterosexual white man, who can poke fun at immigrants, women, and poor, uneducated people, all the while lambasting capitalist greed?

Making it clear that McTeague is not an intelligent man, the narrator spends a lot of time describing McTeague's physical characteristics, which racialize him. For example, the narrator explains that:

Polk Street called him the 'Doctor' and spoke of his enormous strength. For McTeague was a young giant, carrying his huge shock of blond hair six feet three inches from the ground; moving his immense limbs, heavy with ropes of muscle, slowly, ponderously. His hands were enormous, red, and covered with a fell of stiff yellow hair; they were hard as wooden mallets, strong as vises, the hands of the old-time car-boy. Often he dispensed with forceps and extracted a refractory tooth with his thumb and finger. His head was square-cut, angular; the jaw salient, like that of the carnivora. McTeague's mind was as his body, heavy, slow to act, sluggish. Yet there was nothing vicious about the man. Altogether he suggested the draught horse, immensely strong, stupid, docile, obedient. (Norris 7)

From this passage we learn that this young, hairy, and colorful giant, who “often...dispense[s] with” traditional dentist's tools and instead uses “his thumb and finger” (7). The narrator constantly repeats how “heavy” and stupid he is; his mind and body are both “slow to act, sluggish,” descriptions that are often animalized and, then, racialized, invoking an old nineteenth century racist trope describing Irish immigrants. We must keep in mind that the only name we have for McTeague is an Irish surname. In his 1987 essay, “McTeague as Ethnic Stereotype,” Hugh J. Dawson importantly points out that makes, “McTeague's personality possesses a hitherto unexamined racial component corresponding to Norris's well-known nativist prejudices: His physical features, psychology, behavior and—most conspicuously—his highly distinctive name mark McTeague as stereotypically Irish American”

(Dawson 34). Moreover, when the narrator offers the above description of McTeague, instead of commenting on his intelligence, his bedside manner, or even his keen observations, Polk Street “[calls] him the ‘Doctor’ and spoke of his enormous strength” (6). The novel personifies the street when the narrator includes how Polk Street is the one describing McTeague, not the people who live there, even though in a residential neighborhood, there would be plenty of people who could attest to McTeague’s character. He is not smart; he is valued more for his physical attributes, such as his strength, which Norris comments on by describing his “immense limbs” as being “heavy with ropes of muscles” (6); his body is like that of a work horse or a machine that should be managed and *put* to work rather than the body of a man, who can think and do something as delicate and precise as dentistry. He’s “*obedient*” (7), which is an interesting description to receive from the narrator. Whom does McTeague obey? For Norris, McTeague seems *obedient* to capitalism because of his fervent desire to make money and to pass as wealthy and intelligent.

After Norris introduces Trina to McTeague for the dentist to fix Trina’s broken tooth, McTeague forces her into a bizarre, sexually charged scene that, oddly enough, precipitates their courtship. While on a date, to which Trina’s mother and younger brother, Owgooste, have been invited, McTeague treats them to an evening of “dinner and theater” per Marcus’s suggestion. However, McTeague, who the narrator makes clear is a dumb oaf, buys tickets to a variety show instead. Because he does not understand the difference between a variety show and a theatrical production, this social misunderstanding emphasizes McTeague’s lower class status.

Literary scholar, Gavin Jones in his essay, “The Embarrassment of Naturalism: Feeling Structure in Frank Norris’s ‘McTeague’” (2010) persuasively underscores the importance of studies in class and uses *McTeague* as an important case-study. Jones importantly notes that “class-aware criticism has, of late, become especially defensive in its recurring argument that class is the poor cousin in the relations of race, class, gender, and nation” (Jones 46). Therefore, while acknowledging the contentious conversations However, while Jones compellingly advocates for the nuanced study of class, this project maintains that a comparative reading of different literary geographies—regions, fictional or not, that represent active settings onto which social markers can be mapped, further enriches our understanding of a foundationally tumultuous period in the Americas. Therefore, instead of thinking of “class [as] the poor cousin the relationship of race, class, gender, and nation” (46), let us consider how these social markers work together in the dysfunctional genealogy of the United States. After all, Jones argues that *McTeague*:

produces a literary experience that is socially relevant precisely to the extent that it is textually self-conscious and aesthetically self-aware. The points where the book is most intriguing as a literary experience, in other words, are the points where its engagement with the question of social structure is most productive. We do not thus simply gain a new awareness of social inequality by reading *McTeague*. Rather, we come to appreciate how the dynamics of aesthetic appreciation are themselves coincident with a whole matrix of unequal and shifting social relations—a kind of knowledge that is most visible in the cultural patterning of novelistic discourse. (Jones 47)

In other words, let us “appreciate how the dynamics of aesthetic appreciation are themselves coincident with a whole matrix of unequal and shifting social

relations” (47) through studying the entire family tree of the nineteenth-century American race, gender, class, and nation. We need the context of the “whole matrix of unequal and shifting social relations” (47) in order to better understand “the cultural patterning” of literary geographies, in *McTeague*, our literary geography is located in California.

Returning, then, to the variety show, we see that class is not the only social issue that comes to light; this section continues the discussion of the variety show scene and its intersection with race. For example, the variety show includes a minstrel segment where “two men [were] extravagantly made up as negro minstrels, with immense shoes and plaid vests. They seemed to be able to wrestle a tune out of almost anything...[and] McTeague was stupefied with admiration” (Norris 81). McTeague offers a laughable assessment of their musical number by explaining “gravely” that “that’s what you call musicians” (81). The entire scene is distasteful and racist but McTeague laughs at the racism and we laugh at McTeague²⁸. The novel wants us to laugh at him not because he is a racist, but a fool, who has fallen prey to capitalism’s grip. Then, we move on to the next funny moment: arguable, McTeague’s “bewildered” state at seeing “the iron advertisement curtain was let down” (82). As we continue moving along, we end up forgetting about the racism altogether because, as the narrator has already established, McTeague only finds the minstrel show entertaining because McTeague is stupid; therefore, the novel cuts off any further opening for discussion because, logically, only stupid people are racist, a

grave misconception, and one that is commonly used to further circumvent conversions about the eco-intersectional consequences of structural racism²⁹.

Shortly after the variety show outing, we come to third example of subtle racism at work within the novel. When Trina receives the good news of her lottery winnings, she and McTeague, uncoincidentally, announce their engagement on the same night. An important note about the ticket is that Trina bought it from Maria Macapa, the ambiguous Latinx woman or how the novel describes her, the “Spanish-American... [from] Central America” (20). Money connects the two women as later the two become friends after Maria and Zerkow get married. Their abusive relationship ends when Zerkow brutally murders Maria when she refuses to tell him stories about her family’s mysterious gold-plated dinner. Maria’s murder foreshadows McTeague’s murder of Trina in the daycare center.

From her early introduction in the novel to before her tragic miscarriage of her and Zerkow’s baby, Maria would regularly “go on about a gold dinner service she [said] her folks used to own” (18). The myth surrounding this “gold dinner service” (18) is an obvious example of *McTeague* engaging with elements of the California fantasy heritage as is evident from this far-fetched tale of gold (even if they are dishes). The novel does not clearly identify Maria Macapa’s ethnic background. For example, Maria, the “Spanish-American ... [is a] fixture [in the flat] as a maid of all work” (19-20) is the novel’s go-to general domestic laborer. The narrator also often describes her as spending more time stealing and eavesdropping more than she does cleaning. These common tropes of a brown woman working as a domestic laborer are

not neutral but are racially charged, perpetuating a racist discourse common to the time period and, unfortunately, to today's political arena.

Our final example of the novel's persistent but subtle representations of race comes at the end of the novel in the inhospitable Mojave Desert. When McTeague escapes the city after murdering Trina, he makes his way back to the Big Dipper Mine in Placer County, California, the location that he remembers at the novel's beginning. Interestingly, the reason for this destination unclear. In other words, McTeague finds himself at the Big Dipper Mine without any real agency, mindlessly "ending up" where the novel takes him. When he finds himself back in Placer County, this scene is a moment of return for him, making McTeague a kind of prodigal son. However, unlike the prodigal son, McTeague's parents are dead and cannot welcome him home; thus, his return home has failed because he cannot complete the return. He no longer has a home with Trina because they had already separated before he murdered her. All he has left is his gilded bird cage, Trina's lottery winnings, and an overwhelming urgency to run southward.

This "strange sixth sense stirred in McTeague" (297) to keep moving saves McTeague from being caught at the mine. Elaborating McTeague's urge to keep moving, the narrator alludes to his animalistic qualities again by asking the following rhetorical question, "what animal cunning, what brute instinct clamored for recognition?" (297). From the beginning to the end, we never miss the novel's message that McTeague is *other*, something between human and animal. However, this animal instinct saves him from being captured by "the sheriff of Placer County

and the two deputies from San Francisco” (297). As “one of the deputies” says that it will not be “hard to follow a man who carries a bird cage with him wherever he goes” (298), the narrator details McTeague’s trek “through Emigrant Gap, following the line of the Overland railroad” and ending in Reno. There, McTeague decides that he will escape to Mexico. Despite that escaping “across the border” is a common trope usually associated with, but not always, criminal escape, McTeague seems to think that the authorities “won’t think of Mexico” (298). However, this escape southward is only a dream and never becomes a reality. Instead, this southward push stalls never reaching “the other side of Death Valley [...a place] called Gold Mountain” (307), which at face value requires one to literally cross death in order to arrive at gold. The novel does not hide the inevitable ending.

After McTeague escapes capture at the mine, his plans to go southward stall in Inyo County in a town called, “Keeler” (300), where he meets a new friend, Cribbens, who is a gold prospector. The novel seems to offer McTeague a second chance as a prospector when the narrator explains that briefly “[a] new life began for McTeague” with his new “pardner” (306). At least this way of life seems to be more in line with his interests. Sadly, but inevitably, McTeague starts to feel the persistent and “mysterious intuition of approaching danger” (314) again. This time, though, McTeague finds it harder to obey the animal instinct because he struck it rich and does not want to lose his claim. The novel makes it clear that McTeague is too weak to resist the siren song of capitalism. Despite himself, McTeague leaves Cribbens and

their camp behind, taking with him Trina's money, food, supplies, and the bird cage with the canary inside.

Meanwhile, living the life of a California cowboy, Marcus sees a wanted poster for McTeague and decides to join a sheriff's posse in the hunt for his former pal. While the sheriff's posse never locates McTeague, Marcus does give up and eventually meets up with "the enemy" (330). Above all else, the men are thirsty, in a laughable scuffle, Marcus's gun goes off, scaring the burro, knocking all the objects, including the water canteen, onto the parched desert floor. The narrator describes that now that they both faced the "common peril" of dying of thirst, "the sense of enmity between the two had weakened" (332). Their tumultuous friendship mirrors the drastic changes we see in the settings. For example, at the beginning of the novel, we are located in a cramped, hot apartment on a busy street in a crowded city and Marcus and McTeague traverse the urban space together. Trina disrupts their homosocial bond by marrying and moving in with McTeague; she replaces Marcus. However, as we know, their marriage is a dysfunctional disaster and their living spaces only get dirtier and more cramped. After the urban space boils over with Trina's murder, McTeague seeks the open space but, as discussed, he cannot return home. Finally, Marcus and McTeague reunite—at once enemies and friends—in a scorching desert.

The narrator describes McTeague looking out at the "desert. Chaotic desolation stretched from them on either hand, flaming and glaring with afternoon heat. There was the brazen sky and the leagues upon leagues of alkali, leper white. There was nothing more. They were in the heart of Death Valley" (334). The desert

and the sky are untamed by humanity in “[c]haotic desolation”; the land is wild and “brazen” (334). When the two engage in a fatal fight, the desert gets more actively involved when the narrator describes how “[c]louds of alkali dust, fine and pungent, enveloped the two fighting men, all but strangling them” (336). The desert participates in their mutual killing, destroying any life not sanctioned.

While McTeague “wins” the battle against Marcus, he loses the war against capitalism since he sees that he is “locked to the [Marcus’s] body. All about him, vast, interminable, stretched the measureless leagues of Death Valley” (Norris 336). He returns to the stupid McTeague we met in his cramped apartment above Polk Street: a man “stupidly looking around him” (336). The narrator never lets us feel anything but superior to McTeague: we tell ourselves we would never succumb to capitalism in the same way. However, the novel does at least force us to reflect on our “little guilt prison[s]” (336) that we may carry around with us. Are we really better than McTeague?

California Dreamin’ and Other Decolonial Dreams:

In this chapter we have explored three different types of Californias from the very different perspectives of Jackson, Ruiz de Burton, and Norris. For Jackson, her vision of California was a hybrid state that served as a platform for the fight for indigenous rights. However, audiences at the time were more invested in the love story than in righting U.S. government wrongs. While Ruiz de Burton’s novel did not launch a national love story that contributed to California’s fantasy heritage, she did

include topics in her novel that have become timeless, such as assimilation, the fight over the control of the land, property rights, whiteness, and white supremacy.

As discussed in the introduction, if we map our readings of this project's case studies of landscape literatures onto a racial spectrum, as the figurative pendulum swings us down south, what becomes evident is the clear presence of networks of literary geographies. Norris makes up the third component of such a literary geography of California with his novel *McTeague*, which attempts to mask its implicit racist tropes through anti-capitalist rhetoric. Through a direct investigation of the blind spots in Norris's vision of California, gender and race, this chapter has attempted to develop possible openings for discussing those topics explicitly and comparatively in order to map patterns of institutionalized forms of oppression within American literatures.

Chapter Two: The Black Nationalist Trio: Exploring Different Plantation Souths with Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois

In the previous chapter, I launched the first case study of what I have defined as *landscape literature* through a close-reading of three writers whose novels narrate a California landscape that is seemingly race-less, making it a prime candidate for incorporation into the burgeoning and hegemonic national imaginary of the nineteenth-century United States³⁰. Their novels take place during one of this nation's many moments of flux: the abolition of slavery, the establishment of Jim Crow, increased European immigration, growth of the railroads, industrialization, and the country's emergence as a center for capitalism. In the previous chapter, I established how California, despite its geographic location, is often identified as distinct from the rest of the western states within the United States because of its distinctive *cultural geography*³¹. My goal for this chapter is to position the following set of texts next to the California texts in order to explore how social markers, such as race, function differently across the varied regions within the U.S. While the previous chapter removed the seemingly race-less veil shrouding the California novels, in this chapter, my aim is to demonstrate how race, among other social markers, functions differently in the South, a region that is explicitly divided by race. Landscape functions as a linguistic mode that politicizes social problems through the politics of language—its hierarchies, dialects, and the multiple registers of any given language—mapping the contours of a de-centered “American” literature.

Continuing the linguistic exchange between, among, and beyond multiple souths, Martin Delany, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Pauline Hopkins map the landscape of

the American South by offering another way of reading the plantation as a central location of the “united” States of America³². Delany, Du Bois, and Hopkins, then, comprise the trio of black nationalist writers narrating slavery, resistance to slavery, and racism along the plantations of the U.S. South. Hopkins complements Du Bois and Delany—who both offer a black nationalist analysis of southern plantations as sites of resistance and revolution—by exploring the intersections of race and gender. Taken together these three authors offer a vivid and unique exploration of interior and exterior spaces in fiction. Hopkins, for example, relies heavily on interior and conventional set-piece scenes; Delany also makes use of set-piece scenes but his goes beyond issues of gender and race to incorporate a religious element³³. In contrast to the works of these two authors, Du Bois’s novel focuses primarily on how the exterior landscape reflects the material—economic, racial, and gendered—realities of Reconstruction. When Du Bois does move away from the exterior landscapes, he works within and beyond the swamp, which functions as a kind of dreamscape—a place where the two main protagonists, Zora and Bles, build their dreams of getting out from under the oppressive structure of sharecropping.

While it might seem contradictory to discuss interior settings in a study grounded in the concept of “landscape literature,” but this apparent inconsistency is part of the point. I want to challenge and at least partially subvert the typical distinction drawn between inside spaces (interiors) and outside spaces (the landscape), since this very distinction has historically been used in a gendered way to separate male spaces (the larger landscape, the out-of-doors) from female spaces

(home and hearth, kitchen and bedroom), and also has had other dubious social functions, such as to separate “house slaves” or “house negroes” from those who worked in the fields and forests.

For example, within a theatrical context, a set piece scene is a physically constructed set where a particular event or scene takes place. As a literary device, which is how I will be using the term throughout this project, set piece scenes are highly conventionalized interior spaces, meaning that they are often the same types of rooms such as parlor rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. Within these highly conventional interior spaces, typical everyday conversations occur; it is important to note that the “typical” activities that occur within these spaces are gendered as female, especially within the context of nineteenth-century American literatures. In other words, the spaces that the set pieces represent are maintained by female characters but are ultimately owned by the male heads of household. Therefore, as I will explore in this project, first starting with *Blake* and then moving toward a more in-depth analysis of interior spaces in *Contending Forces*, I am most interested in how Delany and Hopkins use these highly conventional spaces in a way that underscores the gender binary at work within their novels.

For this chapter, I explain how Delany’s use of the set piece scene reinforces not only the gender binary but also the racial hierarchies at play. For Hopkins, her entire novel is set primarily within these highly conventional spaces, but I will illustrate through a careful spatial analysis how the gender and racial hierarchies actually break down revealing the precarity and instability of these socially

constructed markers of race and gender. Du Bois, however, departs from this method, and relies more heavily on exterior landscapes such as the swamp, the plantation, and urban centers. These various fault lines written into the very space of the plantation served to further divide and weaken an already subjugated population, so my aim is to cut across rather than to reinforce these categories.

Delany's Unfinished Revolution in the Global South:

I will begin my analysis of how these three authors explore interior and exterior spaces with Martin Delany's novel *Blake*. Like Hopkins, Delany also utilizes these seemingly conventional set-piece scenes throughout his novel. However, his use of these set-piece scenes gestures toward a preliminary kind of intersectionality. I want to be clear, though, that I am not simply *applying* Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality to Delany's novel; rather, I expand her term to include a meditation on the physical environment in which literary characters are living. This eco-intersectional framework allows us to see that Delany's use of the landscape—with his protagonist traveling, almost as if via religious pilgrimage, from plantation to plantation until reaching Cuba, the site of revolution and freedom—and of set-piece scenes demonstrates how Delany pushes forward a politics of black nationalism. In other words, through Delany's use of the landscape, we see how he considers questions of race, religion, and rebellion and how these questions intersect with gender; this intersection of social markers is a preliminary type of intersectional work.

Delany's protagonist, Henry Blake, in *Blake; Or the Huts of America* (1859-1861), not only moves around the greater south within the U.S. but also moves to Canada and finally to Cuba—writing against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and the shadow text *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)—to incite a large-scale slave rebellion^{34 35}. These shadow histories and texts traverse not only space but also linear time, fostering even greater possibility for linguistic exchange. Delany's protagonist Blake is a slave from the West Indies, whose name goes through several versions. He is first called Henry Holland, then, later Henrico Blacus, and finally Henry Blake. He escapes the Franks' plantation in order to reunite with his wife, Maggie, who was sold to a plantation owner at the beginning of the novel. He eventually successfully reunites with her in Cuba. Blake goes on a tour of the U.S. and Canada and finally goes to Cuba to incite a rebellion against the institution of slavery.

While there are many examples of Blake physically reading and engaging with the landscape, I will focus on two scenes from the novel. The first occurs when Blake returns to the Franks' plantation to teach the slaves there how to escape. In a discussion with Andy, Blake explains to him that if he cannot read the stars to identify north, he must rely on "Nature as his guide" (Delany). He tells him to feel the trees and notice which side the moss grows, which usually indicates north. He also tells Andy to notice the riverbanks and how the water is flowing. Although reading the stars and trees to find north is a common trope in literature that represents slavery, what is unique about Delany's *linguaging* of this process is that not only is he helping the slaves to escape to the north but he is also establishing the groundwork

for a revolution; because the trees are alive and growing moss, the land for him is not just a passive object but rather an active agent (perhaps even an accomplice) in his escape. Recalling Mignolo's definition of languaging as "thinking and writing between languages" helps readers move away from the idea that language is set and a fact and toward the idea that "speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction" (Mignolo). In the case of *Blake*, Blake learns and teaches how to manipulate and read the landscape in order to conspire for freedom from slavery. Thus, Delany not only gives Blake agency to manipulate his reading of the landscape to foster the plans for a rebellion but also, implicitly, his audience—we see Blake reading the trees; we see him teaching Andy and Daddy Joe how to read the trees; thus, we realize we also have agency to engage with the active world around us. Importantly, remember that any escape from the plantation is only possible through movement through the landscape.

As we saw in chapter one, imbuing an audience with agency is similar to what Ruiz de Burton does in *The Squatter and the Don* where she constantly emphasizes the importance of reading the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, without referring to the Treaty directly, so that her audience may understand how the U.S. did not uphold it. Ruiz de Burton, like Delany, uses reading as a strategy of conspiracy. Finally, for Ruiz de Burton, too, reading the Treaty will highlight how the physical border between the U.S. and Mexico is ungrounded, and thus, constantly changing, making the border arbitrary and impossible to define (although the U.S. does attempt to with its wording of how to trace the border in an ever-flowing river).³⁶

Not only can the landscape be used as a conspiratorial strategy, but it is also a spiritual space for Blake, especially when he reverts to the *wilderness* to contemplate his plans, rejuvenate mentally and physically, and think through his move away from westernized religion. Only after he has escaped his enslavement can Blake have the opportunity to be alone with his thoughts. For example, after Blake escapes the Franks plantation and “after crossing a number of streams [...] he was brought to sad reflections” (68). Along the river, Blake continues to reflect, and here the language of the text clearly demonstrates how emphatically Delany wants us to see the parallels between Christ and Blake in order to establish Blake’s role in reclaiming Christianity and spirituality for a people whose enslavement has been justified by this very religion. These moments in the wilderness are crucial because of their intertextual contradictions. Delany implicitly alludes, intertextually, to the Bible, while showing, contradictorily, how Blake wants to reject Christianity, as a western religion. His reflections in the wilderness obviously recall Christ’s own sojourn in the wilderness as well as evoking the scenes in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke where Christ prays in the garden of Gethsemane the night before his impending crucifixion. In the midst of praying with his three disciples, Christ steps away from them to reflect upon his inevitable death by stepping away from his disciples and privately reveals a moment of trepidation, vulnerability: he asks God, “if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39)³⁷. This moment of humanity occurs when Christ is in a space where he can be a vulnerable individual who is not immune to human anguish. Blake, an enslaved man, sacrifices himself and

his well-being similarly to Christ. However, instead of seeking to free people from eternal damnation, Blake seeks to deliver enslaved people everywhere by planting seeds of freedom and revolution.

Blake is the black savior to all slaves, and he will show them the way to freedom, if they agree to rise up in a revolt against slavery. However, similar to Christ in his moment of agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Blake's position as the black savior weighs upon him greatly as evidenced in the following passage:

A dread came over him, difficulties lay before him, dangers stood staring him in the face at every step he took. ...A mighty undertaking, such as had never before been ventured upon, and the duty devolving upon him, was too much for a slave with no other aid than the aspirations of his soul for liberty. Reflecting upon the peaceful hours he once enjoyed as a professing Christian, and the distance which slavery had driven him from its *peaceful portals, here in the wilderness*, determining to renew his faith and dependence upon Divine aid, when falling upon his knees he opened his heart to God, as a tenement of the Holy Spirit...*Standing upon a high bank of the stream*, contemplating his mission, a feeling of humbleness and a sensibility of unworthiness impressed him, and that religious sentiment which once gave comfort to his soul now inspiring anew his breast, *Henry raised in solemn tones amidst the wilderness*. (Delany 69, emphasis added)

The italicized phrases in the above quoted passage demonstrate just how crucial this departure into nature is necessary for Blake to assume his role as the savior to the slaves everywhere—as we know from the end of the novel, the fight for freedom extends to Cuba. This moment of reflection mirrors Christ's sojourn in the wilderness as well as his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, also referred to as the Agony in the Garden. In this moment, according to the New Testament Gospel of Matthew, Christ expresses his profound concerns about his impending crucifixion explaining to three of his disciples, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death"

(Matthew 26:38)³⁸. Thus, the garden is a space for Christ to be vulnerable and human; but for Blake, he is rejuvenated from his respite in the wilderness perhaps because he found access to spirituality that is outside of the westernized and white Christianity. For Blake, though, while the biblical reference may be initially read as a contradiction, it is actually an opportunity for Blake to be an individual and express his vulnerability as a man who is attempting not only to incite a rebellion but also reunite with his wife. Delany, then, interweaves the romantic plot with the slave narrative to represent a novel with contradictory impulses. How are we supposed to account for these competing impulses? By thinking through and toward an intersectional feminist lens, which emphasizes and clarifies the unspoken intersections between race and gender, using Toni Morrison's framework from her Tannery Lecture, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken" (1988), I will highlight and analyze the prevalence of these contradictions toward the end of this section of the chapter.

The second example of Blake engaging directly with the landscape comes in chapter XXIV, "A Flying Cloud." In this chapter, Blake continues on his journey from plantation to plantation, planting the seeds of a revolution. Importantly within this chapter, Delany introduces us to a new landscape, the swamp. The swamp is an important location within slave narratives and African American literature more generally because it functions, among other things, as a place *outside* of slavery and *beyond* the cruelty of white supremacy. As I will explore later in this chapter, Du Bois also features the swamp in his novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* through a

more focused lens. While the scene in the Great Dismal swamp is not one of the main locations of the novel, the swamp still functions as a hotbed of revolutionary planning and living. When Blake “approach[es] the region of the Dismal Swamp, a number of the old confederates of the noted Nat Turner were met with, who hailed the daring young runaway as the harbinger of better days” (112). Importantly, Delany does not use the word “confederate” to invoke the Confederate States of America but rather takes us back to the late fifteenth-century meaning of the word as “one who is united with another or others in a compact or league.”³⁹ Therefore, Delany reclaims this word in an important political move. Blake knows that the swamp is a space that is beyond the confines of a racist government. Here he finds:

himself surrounded by a different *atmosphere*, an entirely new *element*. Finding ample scope for undisturbed action through the entire *region* of the Swamp, he continue[s] to go *scattering to the winds* and *sowing the seeds of a future crop*, only to take root in the *thick black waters* which cover it, to be *grown in devastation and reaped in a whirlwind of ruin*.
(Delany 113, emphasis added)

Referring directly to the italicized words above, the swamp is unlike any landscape that Blake has yet traversed; it is as an “atmosphere, an entirely new element,” suggesting that this hybrid land- and waterscape is not only geopolitically beyond the bounds of the United States, but also an unclaimed “region” that is at once a place of rebellion but also a place that is beyond description given that it is occupied by runaway slaves who refuse to return to their masters. As I will discuss later in this chapter, for Du Bois, the swamp is a place of possibility and dreams but for Delany, the swamp described here is unfamiliar with “thick black waters” that will foster the growth of the “seeds of a future crop” that will “[grow] in devastation and [be] reaped

in a whirlwind of ruin” (113). The language in this passage, which is full of words with both positive and highly negative connotations reveals an ominous and unclear future but one ripe with potentially powerful forces of revolution. However, we cannot ignore that this unclear and ominous future reflects the unfinished novel of *Blake* as a whole; the novel ends with an unfinished revolution in Cuba, and here in this moment, Delany seems to be sketching out for his readers how the revolution will look at the end of the novel. The However, we will never know unless a tattered, semi-burned copy miraculously emerges in the future⁴⁰. The revolution as Delany describes it here will be biblical given the futurity of the seeds that are sown in the swamp and will grow in *devastation* and reap in *ruin*.

Toni Morrison, through her detailed analysis of the institutionally racist framework of the American literary canon exposes the silences, or “unspeakable things,” such as race and race relations, buried not only in the process of constructing the canon, but also within the canon’s collection of texts. Delany, too, creates such openings to the hidden—often gendered and always racialized—in *Blake*. Through the repeated use of hyper conventionalized and formulaic “set-piece scenes,” Delany points to some of the unconventional intersections of gender and race within the genre of the black nationalist novel⁴¹. For example, in chapter 62, “Fearful Misgivings,” while Lady Alcora is celebrating the Queen’s nativity, she discovers the “absence of a number of domestics employed about the palace” (263). This particular set-piece parlor scene provides the opportunity for Lady Alcora to not only learn about their absence but also about the planned rebellion. Moreover, we also learn

about the multiple layers of public and private power relations at play within and beyond the wealthy Alcora household. For example, although Lady Alcora wants to relay this important information about the planned rebellion to her husband, the Captain General, he dismisses her by telling her she gives too much weight to what, Hober, her domestic slave, says. Given the historical context of the novel, we must not forget that Lady Alcora is not only being a “dutiful” wife by telling her husband about the secret conspiracy plot, but she *must* also legally disclose this information to him because she, as his wife, is part of his property. In response to her plea for him to listen to her, the Count says “humorously” to the lady that “there are many revelations which [he is] incapable of comprehending, [he] shall make no objection to recording [hers] on the catalogue. Pray tell me, what is your revelation?” (265). Importantly, here, we have the Captain General, admitting that although there are many “revelations” he is “incapable of comprehending,” he will nonetheless add her testimony to the “catalogue” (265). What “official” catalogue is he referring to? What is the importance of adding her testimony to a catalogue if he, as a nobleman and husband, is “incapable of comprehending” it? I suggest that at this moment in the conversation between the Captain and the countess we are reading a performance of social norms, particularly of the intersections of public and private power relations. Why, though, is such a performative interplay rearing its head in a conversation between husband and wife?

The conversation in the parlor scene illustrates how socially constructed markers of difference—including but not limited to race, gender, and class—represent

the intersections of public and private power relations. As we know, race, gender, and class, are not only internalized but are also legalized social markers of difference depending on the social space in which the performance takes place. This particular conversation between the general and Lady Alcora, which takes place in the private domestic space of the parlor, offers an example of a performance of gender and class. While we might be tempted to think of the parlor as part of a “woman’s” domestic space, we cannot forget that this parlor is still part of the general’s estate and, thus, this space is gendered in multiple dimensions. The parlor is also classed in a particular way because, obviously, only the well-to-do have such spare rooms as parlors. The General, then, performing his role as husband and head of the household, will record her account, although he may not be able to understand it. After all, simply allowing her to recount her dream should quiet her concerns enough for him to get on with the more important matters of running a large plantation. Lady Alcora recounts the following dream for us:

‘of being in the interior of Africa surrounded entirely by Negroes, under the rule of a Negro prince, beset by the ambassadors of every enlightened nation, who brought him many presents of great value, whilst the envoy of Her Catholic Majesty sat quietly at the foot of the African Prince’s throne....’
(Delany 265-266)

The significance of this conversation lies in the simple fact that Lady Alcora *dreams* of herself *not* occupying a position of power within the geopolitical space on another continent (Africa) of this new government. In her dream, she becomes the non-subject “under the rule of a Negro prince” (265); thus, she cannot maintain her previous status as the domestic partner, wife, to the wealthy and influential, Captain General.

Moreover, within this dream, we also see that her status as a citizen of an enlightened nation is also jeopardized because she is not part of the entourage of ambassadors bestowing gifts upon the “Negro prince” (266). While the space she occupies is not clear, her position “at the foot of the African prince’s throne” (266) is perfectly clear; she is no longer in a position of power. She is “surrounded entirely by Negroes, under the rule of a Negro prince, beset by the ambassadors of every enlightened nation” (266). Here, then, Lady Alcora is literally at the *center* of the scene because she is, after all, the subject of her own subconscious: the dream itself. However, although she may be at the center of the dream, the changes in power—a new and unfamiliar “Negro” government in an even more unfamiliar landscape, Africa—de-center her. Lady Alcora, a member of the nobility and wife of a powerful man, even seems to be possibly physically threatened by the *surrounding* presence of the “Negroes,” who, interestingly, remain genderless, with the exception of the *prince*. Delany’s specifically placed trope of writing that a mass of “Negroes” is surrounding a formally empowered and wealthy white woman suggests a possible *sexualized* threat to Lady Alcora. This careful manipulation of this racist trope of black men surrounding a potentially helpless/victimized white vulnerable white woman, Madame Alcora, reinforces a dialectical relationship to the former slaves.

The Captain General reinforces Lady Alcora’s sense of doom by further delegitimizing her real concerns with “ludicrous seriousness” (266) when he simplifies her foreboding premonition by stating that her dream “simply means that [they] shall have in Cuba several large cargoes of choice Negroes from Africa” (266).

Remaining undeterred by her husband's attempts to pacify her, she exclaims that she "crave[s] [his] *clemency*" (266, italics added). Asking for her husband's mercy while she attempts to warn him about the impending slave rebellion is indicative of the power relations at play within their marriage. For example, after she warns the Count about the "wakeful reality" that the "Negroes of Cuba are maturing a scheme of general insurrection" (266) he "rebuke[s]" her by exclaiming, "Tush!" (266), as if chastising a child. In a heightening of his impatient tone, he tells the Lady Alcora, "'let us be done with this unpleasant dreamy conversation'" (266), as if her warnings have no merit and can be easily dismissed, like her premonition.

However, a very notable shift in tone comes when the Captain General allows for his wife's warning to settle in. He expresses to her the following statement:

'Thank you, thank you, my dear Charlotte. I have found you in more than one instance a valuable adviser. I shall hereafter modify my actions by your counsels. Let us repair to the drawings rooms,' said the Captain General, supporting his lady on the left arm. (Delany 266-267)

What I want to highlight in this section of their conversation is that while Lady Alcora's reveals her abstract dream to the Captain General and he dismisses her, at first, eventually, the two reconcile. Moreover, the fact that the Captain refers her to as his "valuable adviser" and realizes her potential in this role since she has done this "in more than one instance" (267), underscores how it is simply the gendered performances of heteronormativity within the private space of this salon that preclude this couple from *publicly* confirming examples of their sometimes collaborative partnership (which, of course, only exists within the realm of the private sphere). Finally, the simple gesture of "supporting his lady on the left arm" confirms their

position as a married, wealthy couple, which is clearly a powerful position within any community that prioritizes whiteness, wealth, and heteronormativity, and concludes this set-piece scene.

While their position as a wealthy, married couple is certainly significant, Delany does not simply feature these set-piece scenes to center whiteness, wealth, and heteronormativity; instead, he demonstrates how much these couples, like Lady Alcora and the General, have to lose if the revolution were to take place. The current social hierarchy could be toppled. Because Delany presents this unpredictable construction of a plot (similar to a stage setting), we are left to piece together what might be the possible implications of representing such predictable set-piece/social scenes in a novel. Further because we do not have the ending of *Blake*, we are left to speculate and attempt a discussion. Thus, as we investigate the consequences of narrating unpredictable social settings with unpredictable outcomes, like the one discussed above, the result is a destabilizing of whiteness, wealth, and heteronormativity, a crucial step toward a possible slave rebellion and perhaps even, a social revolution. Destabilizing such powerful forces as white supremacy, wealth, and heteronormativity would rearrange the social hierarchy and dramatically shift the roles of those in power. This imagined future as a result of this imagined destabilizing effect, which stems from Delany's unfinished novel, would function as a coup in some sense because if the slaves could reclaim subjectivity, then, the former masters would require another group of individuals to struggle with under the burgeoning system of American capitalism.

Delany's implicitly anti-capitalist and anti-slavery novel foregrounds Du Bois's much later groundbreaking work, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (1935), where Du Bois explores and emphasizes the active political and social roles African Americans played during Reconstruction. However, Du Bois's anti-capitalist analysis, which has similarities to Delany's preliminary anti-capitalist work, faults apathetic presidential administrations, white supremacy, and capitalism for the failure of Reconstruction⁴². At the end of *Blake*, Delany seems to be launching an anti-capitalist, anti-statist solution but we can only presume this analysis since we do not have a complete novel. Delany is, after all, the "Father of Black Nationalism," and this work as the first black nationalist novel is evidence of a larger political agenda. In other words, this novel, read as a manifesto of sorts, suggests that former slaves leave the continental U.S. and establish sovereignty somewhere else, which would establish another country beyond the U.S. as a contender on the world stage, a country if it succeeded would surely demand reparations for the brutal and forced enslavement of over six million people.

While Delany's unfinished novel leaves us hanging on the edge of a possible rebellion—only possible beyond the boundaries of the U.S.—Pauline Hopkins opens her novel, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* (1900), in Bermuda where we encounter a thriving black community. However, when the family's patriarch, Mr. Charles Montfort, decides to relocate his family to the U.S., this return serves as a catalyst for the novel's problems to unfold. Thus, Hopkins's novel focuses on the drawbacks of remaining within the U.S. and reflects

on limitations of the available and cohesive black communities, whereas Delany offers an unfinished hope for a thriving black community that demands to be located outside of the U.S. At the end of this chapter, I will conclude with Du Bois and how through his 1911 novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, he continues to examine the limitations imposed upon southern black communities.

Hopkins and the Intersection of the Negro and the Woman Questions:

Like Delany, Hopkins also imagines a potential future outside of the U.S. through her historical romance, *Contending Forces*⁴³. The novel begins in Bermuda and then travels to Newbern, North Carolina and Boston, New Orleans; it ends with a ship bound for England. These locations on land and water provide avenues to different pasts, all entangled with what might be called landscapes of slavery, and from there to different futures, speculative landscapes that imagine a decolonization to come. As the title suggests, Hopkins narrates a domestic romance between the female protagonist, Sappho Clark, a mysterious and beautiful stranger from New Orleans, who is a new guest at Ma Smith's lodging-house, and Ma Smith's son, Will Smith. The lodging house, a nominally female space, serves not only as one of the main arteries of the African American community in Boston but also one of the spaces where the intersection of the Negro question and the woman question occurs. Sappho (the name itself an explicit reference to the Greek lyric poet of Lesbos, the place that gave name to the sexual orientation *lesbian*) is haunted by past sexual trauma and chooses this new name as part of her reinvention and reclamation of her personhood⁴⁴. After a series of events and mishaps, Sappho and Will finally marry. At

the end of the novel, the newlyweds, Will's sister, Dora, along with her husband, Dr. Arthur Lewis, and their daughter (named after Sappho), and Ma Smith set out on the Atlantic toward England, leaving the U.S. forever behind them.

The novel opens with the Montfort family's story, which begins in Bermuda. There we meet patriarch, Charles Montfort, who "was the owner of about seven hundred slaves" (22). Importantly, Hopkins explains that while Montfort was:

neither a cruel man, nor an avaricious one ... he [did] los[e] sight of the individual right or wrong of the matter, or we might say with more truth, that he perverted right to be what was conducive to his own interest, and felt that by owning slaves he did no man a wrong, since it was the common practice of those all about him, and he had been accustomed to this peculiar institution all his life. (Hopkins 22)

Not only does Hopkins begin the novel with a historical framing of Bermuda's position within a tangled web of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery, but she also demonstrates how materially imbricated in specific places the socially constructed markers of race and nation can become.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, there are different memories of slavery within the novel—Sappho's in New Orleans as told via the speech Luke Sawyer delivers at the American Colored League and Will's account at the Canterbury Club dinner—which are dependent on the different landscapes, actual and symbolic, that are described throughout the novel. For example, in the above passage, we see that although Montfort has been "accustomed to this peculiar institution [(slavery)] all his life" (22), he eventually has a change of heart and is "determined to leave Bermuda, and after settling in some other land, he would gradually free his slaves without impoverishing himself" (24). Interestingly, Montfort "turned his eyes toward the

United States, where the institution flourished, and the people had not yet actually awakened to the folly and wickedness exemplified in the enslavement of their fellow-beings. For reasons which were never known, he finally made a choice of Newbern, N.C., for a home” (24). Why would a man who has had a recent change of heart regarding slavery choose to relocate to a place “where the institution flourished”? Montfort explains to his friends that once in the U.S., he can free his slaves “under a more liberal government” (28). However, someone reminds Montfort that he “forget[s] the real difference between [their] government and that of the United States. And then the social laws are so different” (28). Because of this brief mentioning of “social laws,” Hopkins establishes early on in the novel the weight that these social laws carry in their influence on local and global legislation, such as Jim Crow. This opening chapter closes with Charles, his wife, Grace, and their two sons, Charles Jr. and Jesse, “[s]ilently [gazing] upon the fair scene before them, each longing for the land so recently left behind them, though no word of regret was spoken” (31). The homesickness that each member of the Montfort family feels at the close the first chapters eerily foreshadows the novel’s closing where we find another family standing on the deck of a ship, but this one bound for Europe, leaving the U.S. behind forever. The significance of the two oceanic departures—one at the beginning of the novel and the other at the end—strongly gesture toward possible futures to be had *outside* the bounds of the U.S.

After Charles Montfort establishes his family in Newbern, N.C., which Hopkins describes as a “phantasmagoric landscape” that is “charming to eyes

unaccustomed to such scenes” (32). This ghostly landscape speaks to the almost uncanny premonitions that foreshadow the family’s unfortunate fate in North Carolina. After a time, Montfort continues with his decision to free his slaves after a time. As the Montfort family attempts to settle in their new home, they are constantly harassed by two white men, Bill and Hank. Even another wealthy landowner, whose plantation the Montfort family takes over, Anson Pollock, remarks upon Montfort’s liberal ideas of setting his slaves free. Bill eventually explains to his friend, Hank, that, “[i]t’s a law of the United States that ef eny man is caught creatin’ dissatisfacshun among the slaves he desarnes death, and death he gits” (62). Sadly, death is the fate that eventually meets Charles, who is murdered by a fatal gunshot wound from Bill and after Bill and Hank lynch Grace, they would like to rape her; however, she drowns herself in the Pamlico Sound. Anson Pollock absorbs the children, Charles Jr. and Jesse, and Lucy into his estate. However, an unnamed mineralogist saves Charles Jr. from being sold into slavery further South. The mineralogist promises Charles Jr. that he will take the young boy back to Bermuda, then to England to “invoke the power of the government” (73), to establish citizenship and personhood. However, they both know that their separation will be years long at best. When Charles Jr. and the mineralogist leave, young Jesse “[finds] himself alone in the power of Anson Pollock” (74). Rather than continue his enslaved life with Pollock, Jesse, sixteen now, escapes to Boston, MA. While there, Jesse “cast[s] his lot with the colored people of the community” (78), who alert him that Pollock is on his way to retrieve him. Jesse departs again, this time for Exeter, New

Hampshire with instructions to connect with Mr. Whitfield, a free African American, who would help him. Arriving at the Whitfield home, Jesse meets a baby, Mr. Whitfield's daughter, Elizabeth Whitfield, who will later become his wife. Elizabeth becomes the mother to Ma Smith, the proprietor of Ma Smith's Lodging House. Following this matrilineal genealogy, Hopkins clearly centers women in this novel as the driving force of survival and history. Importantly, slavery already has a matrilineal tradition as it was determined through the mother, but the novel imagines a new era of black motherhood.

Hopkins can be conceived as an interlocutor between Delany and Du Bois—who are both interested in race relations in the South—in that she pairs the “Negro question” with the “woman question,” the latter foregrounded in the novel with many female and domestic spaces, such as Ma Smith's boarding house and the sewing circle⁴⁵. These conventionally female-only spaces are transformed by the paired questions into more complex raced and gendered zones where women discuss topics ranging from racial politics to the “concubinage” of the black woman. Like Du Bois and Delany, Hopkins also articulates a desire for escaping the confines of the U.S. by transforming the domestic romance into a genre of internationalism, using landscapes to create an imaginary mapped through points of departure from the British West Indies to the U.S. and, finally, to England.

During three particular set-piece scenes—Ma Smith's Lodging-House, the Sewing Circle, and the Canterbury Club Dinner—we see how these nominally female spaces start to open out generically from the domestic and sentimental to the foreign

and speculative through inhabiting moments of intersection between the Negro question and the woman question. Ma Smith's Lodging-House serves as the home base for family, friendships, and even budding romance. During the Sewing Circle scenes, we do not have prose detailing the skilled craft of sewing, crochet, or even knitting. Instead, within this supposedly female and domestic space, the women present engage in sharply focused political discussion. Finally, the Canterbury Dinner scene, which seems like another female space—given its depiction of labor around the preparation and serving of the food—is instead filled only with men, men divided by their political views, as determined by their racial and regional affiliations. Importantly, for Hopkins as well as Delany, the spaces outside of the patriarchy, such as the boarding house, the sewing circle, the Canterbury dinner scenes, and the parlor scene in *Blake* represent complex and counter-intuitive gender roles because some of these spaces are more nominally explicitly female/male.

Ma Smith's Lodging-House

In the lodging-house set-piece scene, Mrs. Smith, or as she is more commonly known, Ma Smith, is a single mother of two children: Will and Dora Smith. Her husband Henry was struck down by an illness and soon after died. Ma Smith transformed their large family home into a lodging house for mostly young black students in the Boston area as a way to supplement their family income. Dora and Ma Smith combine domestic duties with the need for making money resulting in the form of the lodging-house, which is a space for “respectable” and “decent” housing for African Americans in the Boston area. As Ma Smith grows older and more tired,

Dora, after graduating high school, takes “full charge, and proving herself to be a woman of ability and the best of managers, husbanding their small income to the best advantage” (Hopkins 85). Reader of this novel already see how gender roles are fluid with Ma Smith’s position as the main breadwinner for her family. Then her daughter, not her son, takes over the lodging house and “*husband[s]* their small income to the best advantage” (85). Because of the verb, husbanding, Hopkins rhetorically emphasizes that Dora’s managing skills are more than simple domestic duties, rather, she provides for her family by running the family business.

Flexible gender roles are just one example of how the nominally female lodging-house starts to break down when Hopkins interrupts the introduction of the lodging house and its daily activities with a discussion of the Negro question and, thus, centers its position within the black community of Boston. Because just “about every [other] avenue for business [is] closed against them” (86), the lodging house is one of the few spaces that are safe for the African American citizens of this northern city⁴⁶. The narrator contextualizes how even:

with all the heated discussions of tariff reform, the parity of gold and silver, the hoarding of giant sums of money by trusts and combinations, still the Negro question will not ‘down’; it is the most important question, the mightiest in the land, and is quietly assuming greater proportions as it forges its way to the front to take its place shortly as the gravest question in the councils of the nation. (Hopkins 87-88)

Across racial and class lines, the Negro question refuses to be silenced by the Boston community members or by the U.S. government; it “will not down.” In a subtle rhetorical move, the narrator makes an important claim: the answer to the Negro question is racial *and* national, referencing a national debate on the topic of the

“Negro Problem”⁴⁷. The narrator states that this race question is “the mightiest in the land,” a phrase with obvious references to land and physical ability, both of which are commonly associated with American nationalism. The narrator frankly describes how the “Negro question” demands equal footing “with all the heated discussions of tariff reform, the parity of gold and silver, the hoarding of giant sums of money by trusts and combinations” (87). The narrator reinforces how this demand needs to be at the center of the socio-political stage by taking on a militaristic tone: the “Negro question” will “[forge] its way to the front to take its place” (88). The words “forge,” and “front” are commonly associated with the action and the place of battle where this question must “take its place” (88). Interestingly, the next paragraph features Dora “return[ing] to the kitchen” after “her mother had about finished the preparations for supper” (88), a clear shift to a domestic and female space. The novel prepares us to explore the intersection of the “woman question” and the “Negro question.”

The Sewing Circle

For example, when we arrive at the second nominally female space, the sewing circle, which takes place in one of the parlors of Ma Smith’s lodging-house, Hopkins sets the scene by describing how “[i]n the parlor proper all the young ladies were seated ready to perform any service which might be required of them in the way of putting garments together” (143). However, this is the only moment when sewing or garments are mentioned because the focus of discussion is racial politics. The main voices we hear from during this sewing circle meeting are Mrs. Willis, a powerful

widow in Boston's African American community, Dora, and Sappho, who asks Mrs. Willis several questions about passion, sin, virtue, and morality.

Mrs. Willis, one of the leading voices of the sewing circle is "the brilliant widow of a bright Negro politician, [who] had charge of the girls, and after the sewing had been given out the first business of the meeting was to go over events of interest to the Negro race which had transpired during the week throughout the country" (143). Importantly, the real "business" of the gathering of the women in the parlor is not sewing but "to go over events of interest to the Negro race [...] throughout the country" (143). Therefore, not only are the women discussing racial politics at a local level but also at the national level suggesting their sense of national belonging, which may have been a surprise to white and other non-black readers at the time of the novel's publication because of African Americans' status as second-class citizens. Affirming their intellectual and political commitments, Hopkins describes how "[t]hese facts had been previously tabulated upon a blackboard which was placed upon an easel, and occupied a conspicuous position in the room" (143). In other words, while the "sewing machine [has been] placed ready for use" (143), the blackboard's position is "conspicuous" (143) and thus undeniable, suggesting that the real reason for gathering in this sewing circle is not to sew but to discuss racial politics and how African American women, in particular, can facilitate racial uplift through their positions as women. For example, while learning about Mrs. Willis's social and political climb after the death of her husband, a prominent politician, the narrator asserts that "[t]he advancement of the colored woman should be the new

problem in the woman question that should float her upon its tide into the prosperity she desired (147). Significantly, the verb tense with which the narrator asserts these claims about the “advancement of the colored woman” is the subjunctive. In other words, the “advancement of the colored woman” *should* (the subjunctive tense) facilitate prosperity but it cannot be guaranteed. It seems, then, these sewing circles create a space to imagine the possibility of the black woman’s advancement and prosperity. At the time that Hopkins is writing, racial uplift was a common theme among African American women leaders. The idea of racial uplift centers on the fact that respectability politics will ensure African Americans’ successful assimilation into U.S. (white) society.

However, discussions of racial uplift and respectability politics inevitably lead to the socially and historically loaded concept of virtue. Sappho, in fact, poses a question to Mrs. Willis about the virtue of “the Negro woman.” Mrs. Willis responds by explaining that “the native African woman is impregnable in her virtue” (149). Mrs. Willis further explains that their “ideas of virtue are too narrow...general excellence in every duty of life is what [they] may call virtue” (149). However, Sappho, given her past sexual trauma, expands her question to Mrs. Willis by asking her if she thinks “that God will hold [them] [African American women] responsible for the *illegitimacy* with which our race has been obliged, as it were to flood the world?” (149). In other words, Sappho’s question indirectly touches upon the very real threat of rape: can an African American woman still consider herself to be virtuous if she was sexually assaulted? Moreover, do they bear the “stain” of rape for

generations to come⁴⁸? To this discussion, Mrs. Willis explains that “with the African brought to these shores against his will—the state of morality which implies willpower on his part does not exist, therefore he is not a responsible being. The sin and its punishment lies with the person *consciously* false to his *knowledge* of right” (150). While Mrs. Willis offers this explanation of responsibility and punishment, she does not yet broach the subject of gender. Sappho’s question centers on the female gender and the fate of raped and/or sexually assaulted African American *women*. Although standard practice in the English language at the time, Mrs. Willis’s answer continues to elide the woman question through her use of male pronouns, his and he.

Hopkins and Sappho do not take Mrs. Willis’s elision lightly instead, they highlight it. First, Hopkins explains how people tend to respond to Mrs. Willis. Hopkins writes that while “most people realized, after a short acquaintance, in which they ran the gamut of emotions from strong attraction to repulsion, that she had sifted them thoroughly, while they had gained nothing in return” (144). Mrs. Willis, then, is a true politician in the colloquial and negative connotation of the term; she uses her public platform purportedly to resolve or call attention to her constituents’ issues but in reality uses said platform to advance her own agenda, since her constituents “gained nothing in return” (144). While it is true that Mrs. Willis is a woman, and therefore does not hold an actual legislative position, that does not mean her political power within Boston’s black community is any less real. Early on, the narrator reveals Mrs. Willis’s real agenda when explaining how after her husband’s death she “was forced to begin a weary pilgrimage—a hunt for the means to help her breast the

social tide” (146). This hunt to successfully ride the social tide comes in the form of “the great cause of the evolution of true womanhood in the work of the ‘Woman Question’ as embodied in marriage and suffrage” (146). While this is a great cause, the narrator highlights that Mrs. Willis uses this “great cause” to advance herself. The narrator confirms these selfish motives when we are told that Mrs. Willis comes to this cause only “after looking carefully about her” (146). Thus, jumping on the bandwagon of the “Woman Question” is a self-interested endeavor. Sappho confirms the narrator’s warnings about Mrs. Willis when she almost lets her guard down in an aside. However, Sappho is overcome with “a wave of repulsion toward this woman and her effusiveness, so forced and insincere. Sappho was very impressionable, and yielded readily to the influence which fell like a cold shadow between them. She drew back as from an abyss suddenly beheld stretching before her” (155). Mrs. Willis is the “abyss” that stretches out before Sappho, a red flag of clear and present danger and someone she should not trust. Importantly, Hopkins narrates this scene in such a way that validates Sappho’s intuition and feelings, things that cannot be either proven or disproven. In other words, it is Sappho’s feelings and intuition that she heeds as a warning to stay away from Mrs. Willis. Intuition and feelings are often dismissed as frivolous (read: female) and therefore not valid. However, Hopkins lends credibility to different ways of knowing with this moment between Sappho and Mrs. Willis. Hopkins endorses such different ways of knowing, raising the validity of things like intuition and feelings, something commonly used as a way to negatively refer to how women engage in social and political matters⁴⁹. The example of Mrs. Willis is clearly

a demonstration of unresolved class conflict because of the way in which she has used social causes to advance her social standing. Attaining money and status are keys to her successful and prominent standing within the community; however, not everyone, Sappho in particular, can relate to this process of upward social mobility. Unveiling Mrs. Willis's self-interested motivations for joining the cause of black women's uplift demonstrates the sewing circle's complexities because it is at once a nominally female space where black women from the Boston congregate to sew, a space to discuss local and national politics directly affecting the African American community at large, and a space where class conflicts arise but are not always resolved, as with the case of Mrs. Willis and Sappho.

At the close of Sappho's intuitive withdrawal from Mrs. Willis, we find out that what has been gnawing at Sappho is a "thought raised by [Mrs. Willis's] remarks on morality" (156). Sappho explains that she "once knew a woman who had sinned. No one in the community in which she lived knew it but herself. She married a man who would have despised her had he known her story; but as it is, she is looked upon as a pattern of virtue for all women" (156). Sappho's moral dilemma stems from whether or not this unknown woman who sinned should have told her husband about her past sin. Mrs. Willis relays to Sappho a discussion of duty and how the woman "in her case [...] did her duty" (156). However, Sappho is not satisfied with the call to duty because she says that "it is so hard to know our duty" (157). Mrs. Willis, though, further explains that her "duty is not to be morbid, thinking these thoughts that puzzled older heads than [hers]. *Your* duty is, also, to be happy and bright for the

good of those about you. Just blossom like the flowers, have faith and *trust*” (157). The men, then, enter the parlor and interrupt the conversation and Sappho remains “impressed in spite of herself” (157) at Mrs. Willis’s comments. From the conclusion of this conversation, I want to highlight how although Sappho does not *trust* Mrs. Willis, Mrs. Willis tells her to overcome her concerns of morality with *trust*. But, who is Sappho to trust? Mrs. Willis? Then, Mrs. Willis’s advice is to be happy not for herself but for others. She is to be a beautiful flower, an object of beauty that brings joy and happiness to others but what about her own happiness? Hopkins does not leave her readers with clear answers, which, again, complements the novel’s contending forces whether in the form of nominally gendered spaces or cultural practices North and South. The narrator explains that “[t]here are men and women whose seeming uselessness fit perfectly into the warp and wood of Destiny’s web. All things work together for good” (157). Hopkins develops this idea of life working itself out how it should truism within the proceeding chapters.

On the heels of the Canterbury Dinner, the next set-piece scene I will be discussing, Hopkins discusses the Boston branch of the American Colored League, specifically two speeches from Luke Sawyer and Will Smith. Luke Sawyer, a visiting speaker from another branch of the American Colored League tells a haunting story of Mabelle Beaubean. During Sawyer’s story we learn that Mabelle was raped by her father’s half-brother. Upon her confronting the rapist, he simply offered his belief that “any Negress [...is a] direct creation by God to be the pleasant companions of men of my race” (261). This deeply racist and misogynist belief that black women are created

for the pleasure and disposal of white men has a similar message to Mrs. Willis's message to Sappho about her duty: being an aesthetically pleasing object, passive not active. After Mabelle's father confronts her uncle, their house was "mobbed" and set ablaze because he threatened the rapist uncle, who was a powerful white politician, with "the Federal courts and [an] appeal for justice" (261). With the home under fire, Luke Sawyer describes how he "took Mabelle to the colored convent at New Orleans, and left her there in the care of the sisters. *There she died when her child was born*" (261). At the conclusion of this tragic story, a woman in the audience faints and we, along with John Langley, Dora's money-hungry, power-seeking, and untrustworthy fiancé, learn her identity: Sappho Clark. Given the fact that Sappho asks Mrs. Willis pointed questions about a mystery woman who "sinned" and that Sappho has just fainted upon hearing Luke Sawyer's speech, we can safely assume that Mabelle Beaubean is Sappho. Thus, while Mabelle is thought to be dead, along with her child, she has been reborn into Sappho Clark.

Furthermore, John Langley, who discovered that it was Sappho who fainted at Luke Sawyer's account to the American Colored League, discovers in the chapter that follows that Sappho is related to the fortune teller, Madame Frances, and that there is a striking resemblance between Madam Frances's grand-nephew, Alphonse, and Sappho. Thus, Langley discovers that Sappho is Alphonse's mother and Madame Frances is their aunt, relationships that Sappho has been hiding. However, although Langley uncovers these secrets, Madame Frances informs him that he will not marry Dora, as planned, and that his plans to scheme for power and control will also fail.

These predictions close the chapter right before the last set-piece scene, the Canterbury Club Dinner, foreshadowing Langley's inevitable demise.

The Canterbury Club Dinner

Like Ma Smith's Lodging House and the Sewing Circle, the Canterbury Club Dinner propels the plot forward. Hopkins sets the stage for the dinner by describing the following scene:

The Canterbury Club of Boston, which held its annual dinner on this particular evening, was composed of the flower of Boston's literary savans [sic]. ... Side by side with the vital questions of the hour in the world of progress—wireless telegraphy, the philosophy of trusts, the rise and fall of monarchies, the restoration of Greek art, the philosophy of lynching was beginning to engage the attention of two hemispheres, and information was eagerly sought from every reliable source. (Hopkins 287)

What Hopkins has established is that at this social dinner, current events are being discussed and analyzed in an esoteric fashion, especially on the topic of the "philosophy of lynching" (287). Some questions to guide our reading of this scene are: what is the desired outcome for facilitating and engaging in such abstract conversations, especially when the danger of lynching is anything but abstract? Will there be any concrete actions taken or just more philosophical conversation? However esoteric the questions might be, the fact that lynching has been elevated to the status of "vital questions of the hour in the world of progress" (287) offers a sense of hope that people might care about the fate of black men.

The Canterbury Club dinner guests primarily include Republican party members who voted to extend invitations to characters with whom we are already familiar such as Dr. Lewis, the black doctor who is a prominent voice in the Boston

community and Dora's eventual husband, and Dora's brother, Will Smith, who eventually marries Sappho Clark. While their "presence [...] was generally received as a pleasant innovation among that company" (290), their presence is still an *innovation* underscoring how this dinner is another space where Hopkins slowly undoes the hegemonic white male space via intentional changes to the guest list.

Including two educated, well-respected, and young black men at the dinner suggests that any political discussion at the global and national level will have to move beyond a "philosophy of lynching" (287) and toward a grounded conversation that includes the perspectives of two young men of color who are at real risk of being lynched simply because of the bodies they inhabit. Their different and embodied lived experiences offer different perspectives, which offers a glimmer of hope that resonates with the narrator's earlier comments that "brave hearts [...] will answer the cry of distress with patriotic alacrity, and these same brave hearts will demand for every black face, North and South, the fullest opportunity to develop whatever is best within him" (289). Importantly, the hope the narrators offers comes from *hearts* not people, black or white; national ideology and patriotism drives these well-meaning hearts to prevail.

However, as the dinner continues, Hopkins illustrates that well-meaning, brave hearts are not enough to convince everyone that coming together through patriotism is the answer. For example, during a philosophical discussion about religion and reason, Dr. Lewis and Will offer their input but a Southerner, in "*sotto voce*" (294) says to his neighbor that "Negroes are alike with regard to religion;

ignorant, thieving, dirty and lazy, but withal crammed full of religious enthusiasm” (294). With these racist interjections, Hopkins highlights how one person, a man only referred to by his region, the South, speaking from a regional mentality based on racism, seeks to *quietly* comment upon the conversation with racism without adding to the conversation. Will, however, hears these remarks and responds to the Southerner by asserting that, “These faults you speak of are but the remnants of an old irresponsible life. The majority of our race has turned aside forever from the old beaten paths of slavery into the undiscovered realms of free thought and free action” (294). The narrator describes that “[t]here was a murmur of applause as he finished speaking” (295). In other words, the other men at the table validate and affirm his response to the Southerner. However, their affirmation does not stop the Southerner from retorting with the Southern Democrat party line commonly used to justify the violence of Jim Crow, Black Codes, and counter-Reconstruction sentiments by stating that “[t]o most of you the mystery of government will always remain a mystery; and the hope of assimilating many things which are second nature to the white man, will never become a reality to your race” (295). A heated conversation ensues where topics on lynching and false allegations of black men raping white women, nationhood, and Reconstruction are discussed, much to the interest of a “foreign secretary of legation” (295) and Mr. Withington, a representative from England, who expresses that “England is troubled over the fact that the two races do not mix, and to all appearances never will” (296). Mr. Withington’s comments highlight how race relations and the aftermath of the Civil War are viewed outside the United States.

What unfolds is a heated conversation about Reconstruction, lynching, and the false accusations of the rape of white women by black men, used to justify the violent lynchings perpetrated against black men, rendering white women helpless, agent-less, and inevitable victims. Hopkins uses this chapter to demonstrate how these conversations are not just racialized, just national, or even just local discussions; they are discussions that reveal transnational networks at work through the presence of a variety of characters, including Mr. Withington, whose full name, Charles Montfort-Withington, suggests he is the presumed lost relative of the Smith family, a member of the same Montfort family from the beginning of the novel.

John Langley, again, is privy to this discovery and reflects on how he had previously dismissed “Ma Smith with an incredulous smile [because] [i]t had seemed to him the idle boasting of a mind entering its dotage” (302). Here we have another example of blatant dismissal rooted in sexist and ageist tropes simply because as an older and prominent woman in the Boston community, Ma Smith must be lying, according to Langley. And, yet, because of Mr. Withington’s business card—an object that implicitly underscores how language is materially traveling through space—Langley must now confront the truth: Ma Smith’s family history is not only true but their presumed lost relative has returned and it is up to Langley to ensure that the family makes the connection. However, as previously discussed, Langley is an untrustworthy and selfish person whose primary interest is his own social climb to power. Therefore, he will let this newly culled information stew until it is ripe for him to divulge with others, assuring that sharing the news benefits him personally.

Returning our attention to a brief moment during that contentious dinner conversation, Langley explains to Mr. Withington how he and other non-U.S. persons do not know the truth about what has been unfolding in the South because “newspaper reports are doctored by local Southern writers who participate in the lynchings. Free speech and public discussions are not allowed. In the South you must think and speak as the mob dictates” (296). At this statement someone incredulously asks about “constitutional equity before the law” (296-297) to which Will responds with a laugh saying that such a concept is a “political fiction” (297). This quick moment of unity between two opposed characters in the name of justice—in this case stating the truth about censorship and misinformation—complicates our understanding of Langley as he later attempts to extort Sappho. Langley’s presence in the novel is somewhat like McTeague’s: an unfavorable character from whom we learn what not to do; unlike McTeague, though, Hopkins does not use her villain as a scapegoat.

By exploring these different conversations taking place during the Canterbury Club Dinner set-piece scene, readers come to realize how Hopkins is not only exploring the intersection of the Woman and the Negro question but also how these intersections are spatially determined. Therefore, what can and cannot be said is spatially determined as with the examples of the Southerner and Mr. Withington. Hopkins does not shy away from her subtle yet present political beliefs because Mr. Withington, an English abolitionist has a full name whereas the Southerner, mentioned above, is simply identified by his region. What conversations can happen

in England versus conversations in Boston? Moreover, through her use of set-piece scenes, Hopkins invites us to analyze how these conventionalized spaces, such as Ma Smith's lodging house, the sewing circle, and the Canterbury Club dinner not only illustrate how these spaces are racialized and gendered but also regionally and nationally inflected. Thus, through her manipulation of interior spaces in the form of highly conventional set-piece scenes, Hopkins demonstrates how social questions of race, gender, and sometimes class are grounded in larger discussions about space, which reveals how space is marked socially constructed, and thus, flexible, not fixed.

These questions of socially constructed interior spaces that mirror the socially constructed exterior and national spaces brings me to W.E.B. Du Bois and his lifelong dedication to addressing the Negro Question. Du Bois explores questions about exterior spaces and the failures of Reconstruction in his novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), that represents a kind of bildungsroman centered on a female protagonist. Questions of space are at the heart of the novel in that the novel is fictionally located in Toomsville, Alabama. Space determines what an author will focus on and why. As explored through Delany and Hopkins, interior spaces offer a platform to explore the intersections of women's roles within these spaces in the context of larger, political, and national questions of how African Americans occupied spaces during and after slavery. As for Du Bois, he is more concerned with exterior spaces and how these spaces determine the types of conversations to be had. For example, the swamp, a central location functions as a place of possibilities, dreams, and of futures outside of the control of the plantations; and the "owner" of

this dreamscape is the most disenfranchised figure in the novel and in the United States at the time: a young, uneducated, and unmarried black girl, Zora. Outside of the confines of the swamp, the main exterior spaces are a school, erected on former plantation land, and the former plantations themselves, which have been transformed into new sites of oppression under capitalism: fields for sharecropping. From the school, we hear from the white, female, and educated school teachers, Miss Smith and Miss Taylor. From the sharecropping fields, we hear from the former plantation owners, who are desperate to remain in control of these landscapes, so productive of revenue.

Du Bois at the Crossroads of Race, Gender, and Space:

Within the deeply rooted tradition of plantations, cotton, and white supremacy, W.E.B. Du Bois's 1911 novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, explores how the cotton industry thrives on the exploitation of black bodies during this time of post-Emancipation, which saw the passage of the Civil War Amendments^{50 51}. Du Bois centers the narrative on the silver fleece, which refers to cotton, the cotton industry, and the characters who grow, pick, and capitalize on the cotton industry sometime during Reconstruction^{52 53}. The novel focuses on the following female characters: Miss Smith, Miss Taylor, Zora, Miss Caroline Wynn, and Elspeth. While it may seem that Du Bois departs from Hopkins's explicit joining of the woman and Negro questions, Du Bois, like Delany, is implicitly putting women at the center of novel. For Du Bois, the women—black and white, Northern and Southern, and rich and poor women—provide the narrative structure of novel.

The novel takes place in a small town in the fictional Tooms County, Alabama, and in Washington, D.C. In Tooms County, Northern abolitionist transplant, Miss Smith, established a Negro school thirty years ago prior to the moment we first meet her in chapter two much to the ire of the white aristocrats of the Southern plantation tradition. Because of the anti-black sentiments of the white citizens of Tooms County, the school's financial stability has always been precarious at best. The school's future remains uncertain because of the land on which it stands: acres from Mr. Tolliver, an aging, former plantation owner, who would rather sell the land to the school than to sell it to his main competitor, Colonel Cresswell. Colonel Cresswell, who symbolizes the height of the old Southern aristocratic plantation society, and his son, Harry, do everything in their power to undermine the efforts of Miss Sarah Smith and other investors who want to keep the school running simply because the Cresswells would rather have uneducated cheap labor than educated blacks, who either leave the South for northern opportunities, or worse, those who want to buy their own land and stop paying the Cresswells rent as exploited tenant farmers.

One of the Cresswells' tenants is Elspeth, who has a log cabin deep in the woods by the swamp. She is Zora's guardian and is often known as a witch. For example, consider the following description of Elspeth when Bles and Zora first meet. Bles hears someone shouting for Zora, and when he looks at who it is he sees, "old woman [, who is] short, broad, black and wrinkled, with fangs and pendulous lips and red wicked eyes" (Du Bois 6). Elspeth maintains a semblance of autonomy in the

woods by providing white men of the plantation communities with young black girls with whom they may do as they please, i.e. sexually assault. We later learn that Zora was one of these young girls who was raped and made “impure” by Harry Cresswell⁵⁴. Zora often escapes the cabin, Elspeth’s clutches, and the repeated abuse by these white men to the freedom of the woods, especially the swamp. During one of these nighttime escapes, she meets Bles.

This novel is about two young black children, a young girl, Zora, and Blessed (referred to by his nickname, Bles) Alwyn. The two meet when Bles is making his way to the Negro school where Northern abolitionists, like Miss Sarah Smith, have dedicated their lives to educating formerly enslaved children, much to the ire of the former Southern plantation aristocracy. Bles is lost in the woods, Zora’s home, so she shows him the way to the school, even though does not understand Bles’s desire to go there because, for her, everything she could ever need is in the swamp. Bles and Zora grow together in their friendship, but when that friendship turns into love, Bles walks away from Zora because he discovers that she is not *pure*. A fictionalized yet *realistic* account of the cotton industry in the deep South forms the backdrop to the love story between Zora and Bles.

Bles eventually goes to Washington D.C. to work as a clerk for judge but cannot get hired because he is black. There he meets Miss Caroline Wynn, an educated teacher who, although she can almost pass as white, does not and is also discriminated against. However, she is determined to attain a powerful social and political position within the upper class of black citizens in D.C. While Bles is trying

to find clerkships in Washington, unbeknownst to him, Zora is also there, serving as maid/caregiver/companion to Mrs. Vanderpool, a very wealthy white Northern woman, who takes a special interest in Zora by educating her academically and socially. Mrs. Vanderpool and her husband once visited the Negro school in Tooms County.

Joining Miss Smith as a teacher in Tooms County is the young and unmarried, Miss Mary Taylor. Du Bois emphasizes her youth, upper-class standing, and marital status as signifiers that highlight her initial motivations for being a teacher. The narrator, in fact, explains that Miss Taylor “did not take a college course for the purpose of teaching Negroes” and was thus “disappointed” that “the only opening facing her was the teaching of children at Miss Smith’s experiment in the Alabama swamps” (12). Her brother, John Taylor, a Northerner interested in capitalizing on the cotton industry, however, wants to use his sister’s position in the community to ascertain where he may best invest his money in the Black Belt.

Following Du Bois’s women-centered logic of the novel, we can use Zora as an index to understanding the role of landscape in the novel, such as the landscapes of cotton fields, the swamp, and the schools that sits on Mr. Tolliver’s former plantation acreage—another complication to the school’s tangled connection to the landscape that I will discuss later in this section. These spaces, which almost all are definitively manmade (the fields and the schools), realistically ground the story within a fictional town. Their presence reflects how social markers shape these spaces. For example, slavery (race) necessitates the creation of cotton fields, a typically oppressive

environment; the swamp, which could be either manmade or a natural stagnation of water flow, can be used as either a potential water source to irrigate crops or as place of refuge from slavery; the schools represent spaces where young, black children, the living legacies of slavery, are being granted (through a federal mandate) an education, something once punishable by law. All of these spaces—the fields, the swamp, and the schools—are not only familiar to Zora but they represent the fault lines of her reality. Through the women figures, Du Bois also makes clear how the landscape is an economic force in the Black Belt, a force that whites use to suppress blacks. For the remainder of this chapter, I will explore the intersections of gender and race via the land by focusing on the main female protagonist, Zora. Other prominently featured female characters like, Miss Smith, Miss Taylor, and Miss Caroline Wynn indicate how the landscapes are even further complicated through class.

Let us begin with Zora's home and one of the main landscapes operating within the novel: the swamp. The narrator explains at the beginning of chapter five, titled "Zora," that "Zora [is a] child of the swamp[...who is] full of great and awful visions, steeped body and soul in wood-lore" (27) ⁵⁵. The swamp is both a place of nightmares and dreams—Zora's home and Bles's unknown. Zora, the leading black female—gesturing toward Du Bois's developing gender conversation—explains to Bles that "over yonder behind the swamp is great fields full of dreams, piled high and burning" (6). As discussed earlier in this chapter, Du Bois's swamp is different than Delany's because for Du Bois the swamp remains a space where dreams manifest, where a slave can become a whole person beyond government control, and where a

young woman can imagine her own future. Zora escapes her mother's hut to roam free in the swamp; it's her home. For Bles, the swamp is the middle ground between the school and the plantations; the swamp is where Bles first meets Zora and although he is afraid of its many hidden mysteries, she quickly demonstrates to him the place's power. From this chapter's first section, recall that for Delany, though, the swamp is the hideout for runaway slaves. The former slaves are living outside of the confines of the United States but must be quiet and secretive. There is no coming and going from the swamp to the plantation. By the time we get to Du Bois's novel, the swamp is the connection to a black community that is outside of white plantation society. The swamp almost functions like a watery borderland, even an island, connected to the "mainland," but not quite. Because of the constant presence of the swamp, we see that the novel, even while seemingly primarily located within the boundaries of the U.S., is actually reaching beyond the edges of those boundaries, gesturing toward freedom elsewhere. The in-between space of the swamp (an unstable landscape) and firm ground (the basis of the nation) where the water carries the residues of both back and forth, creates openings for a larger vision, such as the dreams that Zora tells Bles about the perfect location for harvesting the silver fleece⁵⁶.

The silver fleece Du Bois refers to here is the same cotton he calls the "golden fleece" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). In this 1903 groundbreaking work, Du Bois includes a chapter titled, "Of the Quest of The Golden Fleece," which anticipates the later-written novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), and offers a case study for this section of chapter one. The silver fleece refers to the cotton that

grows from special seeds Elspeth has in her possession, hidden away in the floorboards of her cabin. The chapter “Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece,” Du Bois opens with the following question: “Have you ever seen a cotton-field white with the harvest—its golden fleece hovering above the black earth like a silvery cloud edged dark green, its bold white signals waving like the foam of billows from Carolina to Texas across that Black and human sea?” (Du Bois 89). In this question, we see Du Bois pushing the boundaries of the U.S. borders because he describes the fleece “waving like a foam of billows from Carolina to Texas across that Black and human sea” (89). The landscape that holds this silver-golden fleece not only encompasses different regions within the U.S. South but also pushes toward a geopolitical understanding of a “Black and human sea” (89). What is radically significant about this description of the fleece is that Du Bois is writing *Blackness* back into the landscape since the fleece “hover[s] above the *black* earth” (89, emphasis added). The shift from gold to silver most of all underscores Du Bois’s unfinished and contradictory scholarship on the “Black Belt.” He continued to update this scholarship throughout his life, but because of the disciplinary limitations of a strictly sociological lens, it is through his creative work that allows him scope for conceptual experiments Du Bois not feasible in a sociological study, such as the creative choice to center women, and in particular, a young black woman in *Quest*. Zora connects us not only to the swamp but also to the silver fleece because the silver fleece is the promise of a future without having to be constrained economically, socially, and

politically by the Cresswells (white supremacy at large), speaking to the larger problems of a new form of slavery in the Reconstruction South: tenant farming.

The swamp attempts to serve as a place beyond the reach of poverty, beyond the clutches of white supremacy. When Zora introduces Bles to the swamp, she guides him, “tak[ing] his hand and [leading] him through the swamp, showing him all the beauty of *her* swamp-world” (28, emphasis added). Zora is the teacher; she is the guide; she demonstrates mastery over and ownership of the landscape of the swamp. The school, however, remains unfamiliar territory to Zora but for Bles, the school affords the possibility of assimilating into “American” (read, white) society, which was, in part, the aim of Reconstruction. Bles, thus, is almost a stand-in figure, underscoring the radicalism of the novel. Du Bois subordinates the male figures by developing the story through a strikingly female-dominated cast of characters, even with minor characters such as Mrs. Vanderpool, the novel’s wealthy Northern philanthropist who runs the household, her husband’s political career, and their respective finances.

The tangled roots of the actual property on which the school sits reflect the double-bind of the landscape imperative in this literature: it supports the future through an unfinished past. Miss Smith has built the school on the unused acreage of Mr. Tolliver, an aging, former plantation owner, who did not acquire as much wealth as the Cresswells and thus had to sell off much of his land. Instead of selling it to Cresswell, however, Tolliver sold the land to Miss Smith, which he did as a personal affront to Colonel Cresswell because of the Cresswell family’s well-known

resentment of Reconstruction's goal to assimilate newly freed slaves into American society through housing, paid work, and education⁵⁷. For example, Harry Cresswell, the Colonel's son laments the school and Reconstruction's social reforms when he complains that they "can't keep a maid or a plough-boy on the place [the plantation] because of this devilish school. It's going to ruin the whole labor system. [...] I'll make Elspeth take that girl out of school if I have to horse-whip her, and I'll warn the school against further interference with our tenants" (58). Ironically, Harry Cresswell complains that it is because of the school that their beloved "labor system" will fall to shambles and they will lose "tenants," when in reality, the "problem" lies in the fact that their tenants are really slaves by another name, and educating the newly freed slaves will only encourage them to leave precarious manual labor behind in search of the opportunities that education can bring⁵⁸. Moreover, in this passage, we see the control the Cresswells have over Elspeth—and Zora by proxy—by threatening to "horse-whip" her, a punishment frequently reserved for slaves by their masters. Finally, the Cresswell family has influence over the school, even if the school is not on their property, because Harry Cresswell can make the lives of their tenants and their tenants' children miserable by brutally punishing them for attending Miss Smith's school.

The status of the school's property are even further complicated by the presence of the newly arrived teacher, Miss Mary Taylor and her brother, John Taylor, as previously mentioned. Chapter four of the novel, "Town," opens with a paragraph explaining that "John Taylor had written to his sister. He wanted

information, very definite information, about Tooms County cotton; about its stores, its people—especially its people” (18). It is obvious from this pressured demand that John Taylor is attempting to exercise patriarchal authority over his sister Mary. However, it is implicit that John depends on his sister’s response to his pressing questions. Without her connections in Tooms County, it would be hard to ascertain this information; thus, he needs her cooperation. Mary, however, remains ignorant of the importance of the cotton industry and her brother’s pending investments.

For Mary her social standing is much more important. She relates to the South not as a place of dreams like Zora or Bles, or as a place of untapped economic investments like her brother, but as an unfamiliar place she must navigate as an educated, white, Northern woman. However, in chapter six, “Cotton,” the narrator explains not only Mary’s own implicit connection to cotton but also the world’s explicit dependence upon the industry. The chapter opens with the following paragraph:

The cry of the naked was sweeping the world. From the peasant toiling in Russia, the lady lolling in London, the chieftan [sic] burning in Africa, and the Esquimaux [sic] freezing in Alaska; from the long lines of hungry men, from patient sad-eyed women, from old folk and creeping children went up the cry, ‘Clothes, clothes!’ Far away the wide black land that belts the South, where Miss Smith worked and Miss Taylor drudged and Bles and Zora dreamed, the dense black land sensed the cry and heard the bound of answering life within the vast dark breast. All that dark earth heaved in mighty travail with the bursting bolls of cotton while black attendant earth spirits swarmed above, sweating and crooning to its birth pains. (Du Bois 35)

Within this description we see multiple threads of Du Bois’s theoretical scholarship at work. First, his global thinking as evidenced by the poverty that encompasses the world from Russia to London to Africa and to Alaska. Secondly, his reliance upon a

type of *call and response* manifests in this opening paragraph with an answer to this cry for clothing coming from within “the wide black land that belts the South [... where] black attendant earth spirits [swarm] above” (35). The land is black and its attendants are (literally) elevated to the position of “earth spirits” suggesting a kind of divine relationship to the land, something we can think of as a possible counter-narrative to manifest destiny, the supposed divine right of white Americans to settle on occupied land west of the Mississippi River⁵⁹.

Finally, in this passage, Du Bois highlights how different characters connect to the land. As we see, Zora and Bles dreams on this land; Miss Smith works at the school, which sits upon this black land; Mary Taylor, however, *drudges* upon the land. She does not have the same divine connection to the land or sense of purpose that the black attendants, Zora, Bles, and even Miss Smith have. Later in the same chapter, we learn that “Miss Taylor [went] to Lake George for her vacation after the first year at the Smith School, and she and Miss Smith had silently agreed as she left that it would be better for her not to return. But the gods of lower Broadway thought otherwise” (38). Again, that same patriarchal power structure appears because the “gods of lower Broadway” represent Manhattan’s financial district, where her brother, John works to launch his investment in the southern cotton industry. Therefore, he needs Mary to maintain her position in the school so that she may continue to inform him of the Black Belt’s community and economic structures. Thus, Mary returns and justifies her brother’s imposing wishes through the

framework of philanthropy. The narrator explains at the opening of chapter seven, “The Place of Dreams,” that:

she was to induce Miss Smith to prepare for Mrs. Grey’s benevolence by interesting the local whites in her work. The programme attracted Miss Taylor. She felt in touch, even if dimly and slightly, with great industrial movements, and she felt, too, like a discerning pioneer in philanthropy. Both roles she liked. Besides, they held, each, certain promises of social prestige and society, Miss Taylor argued, one must have even in Alabama. (Du Bois 45)

Thus, connecting to the chapter’s title, Miss Taylor’s dream is to be in a high-powered social position, a “pioneer of philanthropy” and therefore, an important social figure “*even in Alabama*” (45 emphasis added). This desire to be in such a high social and philanthropic position backfires as she ends up marrying Harry Cresswell, who she believes will solidify her social standing, because he is an abusive, power- and money-hungry man, the same man who consistently abused his position to cajole Elspeth into having sexual control over the young girls, including Zora, who frequented her cottage. Mary eventually realizes the poor match she has made with Harry Cresswell, and they live separately until the end of the novel. He remains in the urban North, acquiring more wealth and power, and she returns to the South, to the school, and to the mission of educating young, black children.

Zora and Bles never forget their southern roots in the swamp, the place of dreams. Together, they struggle and toil in the swamp to sow Elspeth’s special cotton seeds⁶⁰ that produce the finest, silver cotton crop ever seen in the South. While it seems like their match is perfect, Du Bois complicates their romance through the topic of purity. One day while Mary Taylor guides a group of wealthy Northern

philanthropists through Tooms County, they spot Zora and Bles kissing off of the side of the road. Harry Cresswell, who is driving the group, rebukes them and later Mary asks Bles if it is possible that he does not ““know the sort of girl she is?”” (125). Bles runs toward to the swamp to confront Zora by saying, ““You—you told me—you were—pure”” (127). Zora tells him that she told him the truth but Bles responds by yelling that ““[she] should have *died!*”” (127). Zora, now in tears, rushes to explain that:

He was our master, and all the other girls that gathered there did his will [...] I began running away, and they hunted me through the swamps. And then—then I reckon I’d have gone back and been—as they all are—but *you* came, Bles, *you* came, and you—you were a new great thing in my life, and—and—yet, I was afraid I was not worthy until you—you said the words. I thought you knew, and I thought that—that purity was just *wanting* to be pure.
(Du Bois 127)

Sadly, what Zora explains to Bles is what Harry Cresswell did to her and the other young black girls living in or near Elspeth’s cabin. Harry Cresswell raped her and any other young girl he could. Within the dashes of this passage is the unspoken cruelty of rape, a brutal act that commences Delany’s novel, *Blake*, to which I referred at the beginning of this chapter. The only word Zora can utter is *purity*, a topic that Hopkins wrestles with consistently in *Contending Forces*. Here, Du Bois dialectically pairs purity and rape through the marked absence of the word rape; the rape only exists within the dashes. After Zora tells Bles that it was indeed Harry Cresswell—again not by directly naming him but by “point[ing] toward the Cresswell Oaks” (128), he leaves her. Zora is abandoned with her half-spoken truth and “stretch[es] herself upon the black and fleece-strewn earth” (128). The same black earth that answers the cry of

the naked around the world consoles Zora. Moreover, this same consoling earth offers Zora an opening to release an *unspeakable thing* á la Toni Morrison by revealing her truth without actually using any words, only gestures. While the earth supports her body, she uses her arm to point toward Cresswell Oaks exposing Harry Cresswell as her rapist.

After this revelation, as mentioned earlier at the beginning of this section, when Bles leaves Tooms County for Washington D.C., where he attempts to be hired as a clerk in political offices, but, because of his skin color, is denied work. Recall when he meets the almost-white-passing Caroline Wynn, she gets him a job. She is “[n]ot extremely colored but undoubtedly colored, with waving black hair, light brown skin, and the fuller facial curving of the darker world” (179). Through her influence, Bles gains a position in Senator Smith’s office⁶¹. Bles feels indebted to her and eventually develops romantic feelings for her. Miss Wynn, however, much like Mary Taylor (now Mrs. Cresswell at this point in the novel), desires social power and eventually turns Bles down in order to accept a proposal from Mr. Stillings, a man who connived his way into Bles’s promised position of “Register of the Treasury” (250). Thus, heartbroken and jobless, Bles returns to Tooms County where Zora has already returned after spending years as a personal aid to Mrs. Vanderpool, learning to read and write at a high scholastic level. Zora returned to the South, to her beloved swamp, to care for and teach her black people how to fend for themselves outside of the new enslavement of tenant-farming. Bles and Zora eventually resolve their differences when Bles asks for Zora’s forgiveness, which she grants.

The novel concludes with a black-owned and operated cotton industry stemming from the swamp, and Zora asking for Bles's hand in marriage. Much like Jane Austen, Du Bois also concludes his novel with a marriage proposal; however, one of the major differences is that it is the woman, Zora, who asks Bles to marry her. She is not afraid to declare her love for him or to ask for what she most desires: a partner, in love and life. Thus, following Du Bois's woman-centered logic, we see how the male characters function almost like stand-ins and the women, from the major to the minor characters, propel the novel's structure and plot. Because of the women in the novel, we have a completed story; their centered subjectivity frames the narrative in way that gestures towards Du Bois's half-articulated and unfinished project on the intersections of race and gender. Therefore, Du Bois's *Quest* is an implicitly feminist novel, centering on women, and depending on their actions to propel the narrative. Moreover, it is through these female characters that Du Bois establishes the complex intersections of race, gender, and landscape.

Black Nationalist Landscapes: Political and Literary Spaces that Challenge Nationalism

Before concluding this chapter, I want to discuss how Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois form a Black Nationalist collective of U.S. Southern writers through their descriptions of space—interior and exterior—in their novels. While each author employs space differently, they are all exploring the limits and possibilities of narrating social markers through space. For Delany, his protagonist travels from plantation to plantation preaching revolution and freedom for slaves; Henry's travels

begin on the North American continent and end in a corner of the global south: Cuba. Delany makes it clear that enslavement is the current reality for slaves in the United States and that freedom through revolution is only an option beyond the border. As for Hopkins, she offers readers the chance to explore the possibilities of navigating and living in black spaces *within* the boundaries of the United States, which is a stark difference from Delany's radicalizing mission to educate slaves on the possibilities of freedom that lie beyond the U.S. boundary. As for Du Bois, he explores exterior landscapes located within the U.S. South through the political and economic lens of the ramifications of sharecropping and its ramifications. In my overall project, I am interested in how authors use space and landscape to center non-white and non-male characters. A spatialized lens allows us to read Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois comparatively while cutting across common racial and ethnic categories. Reading them together other than for their own social marker as African American authors. Reading them together here as a Black Nationalist collective, highlights the importance of black communities, freedom, and their stake in soil and citizenship.

Chapter Three: The New Orleans Global South: A Cityscape Intersected by Social Markers and Socio-political Histories

The last chapter follows a geographic and literary southward movement in the novels of Delany, Hopkins, and Du Bois from the location of slavery to the long-sought-after freedom and happiness, found only in displacement, leaving the United States behind. In this chapter nineteenth-century New Orleans serves as a gateway to freedom and fosters the possibility of revolution by pushing southward to different locations in the Global South. Speaking to the larger project of examining nineteenth-century American novels through an eco-intersectional framework, the city provides us with a rich example of the intersections possible between social markers like race, gender, and class and the layered histories of former French and Spanish colonial powers, burgeoning U.S. control, and the oppression and enslavement of African and indigenous people.

Two authors commonly associated with New Orleans, George Washington Cable and Kate Chopin, center the city's history in their fiction and, as a result, are usually categorized as regionalists or local colorists. Cable's novel *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life* (1880) is set in hemispheric place and time, extending back almost to the pre-conquest Spanish Americas and forward to the period of the US annexation, whereas Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) is set in its own present. While both novels take place in and around New Orleans, each moves the reader beyond the boundaries of this cityscape by pushing southward—a theme present throughout the dissertation from Ramona to Edna—to communicate and engage with the larger network of the Global South.

Evoking the United States, the present controlling power, as well as the past French and Spanish colonial empires, *The Awakening*'s Grand Isle, for example, is located in the Gulf of Mexico and is only 636 miles away from Havana. Cable reaches even further than Cuba, going as far as Haiti, if only in the form of the ever-unfolding story of Bras Coupé⁶². This back and forth movement, from Louisiana all the way to Haiti, illustrates the work of languaging the landscape that allows us to open an exchange between bodies and bodies of work beyond national borders.

Cable and Chopin use detailed descriptions of New Orleans and the surrounding southern landscape to move between the local and the global. *The Awakening* alternates between the rural, seascape of Grand Isle and the bustling urban center of New Orleans, whereas *The Grandissimes* offers a temporally based space. Cable historicizes New Orleans's past, present, and future through descriptions of the city's monuments and how they have changed meaning with each governing power. Thus, even with different perspectives framing the narratives, each novel demonstrates how New Orleans transforms before the reader's eyes from the newly acquired colonial city in *The Grandissimes* to the modern city that is at the heart of *The Awakening*. The city oscillates as well between serving as the gateway to radical, revolutionary action in Cable and the alienating commercial space from which the protagonist Edna Pontellier must withdraw in order to develop herself more fully.

Similar to Pauline Hopkins's meticulous tracing of "Negro life North and South" in her later novel, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* (1900), Cable presents his readers with an in-depth and critical look

into New Orleans Creole life, culture, and history. However, while Hopkins focuses specifically on black women, and black life, culture, and history in Boston and New Orleans, Cable narrows his geographic focus to New Orleans. Cable's historical romance includes descriptions of quadroon balls, tangled family histories, tales of well-established and warring Creole families—the Grandissimes and the Fusiliers—and, finally, the Creole caste system, including all of the social, political, and historical tensions that emerge from systemic oppression. Through a detailed analysis of Creole culture and history, and detailed descriptions of interior and exterior spaces in and around New Orleans, Cable's *The Grandissimes* tells a “story of Creole life”⁶³. The term “Creole,” and specifically, “Louisiana Creole,” refers to someone who has descended from inhabitants of colonial Louisiana under French and Spanish rule. More generally, “creole” refers to anyone who is born in a colonized country whose ancestors are from the colonial power.

For Cable, the intersections between social markers and layered histories of colonial power, new U.S. order, and slavery take place in the form of recounting Creole family history and in the form of detailed New Orleans landmarks that have survived from different eras of its history. Chopin, on the other hand, chooses to depict the city not through any explicit use of race, but through descriptions of the internal spaces like parlors, and external spaces like the seascape of Grand Isle or “the old Kentucky blue-grass country” (47) briefly mentioned from which the main protagonist hails. Thus, while Chopin minimizes race, as does Frank Norris in relation to the California South, Cable explicitly relies on race to not only paint the

“local color” of New Orleans but also to highlight the racism inherent within the Creole caste system.

Both Cable and Chopin interpret the established formulas of local color and regionalism by featuring landscapes, seascapes, and cityscapes that function as maps of the newly acquired *exotic* region called Louisiana⁶⁴. Writing during the post-Civil War period, when the nation was reimagining a new American identity, these regional authors not only offer an inside-look into different pockets across the continent, but they also contribute to destabilizing the notion of a hegemonic Americanness through the subject matter they address in their novels: Creoles, slaves, newly freed slaves, free-born black citizens, and women. While Cable and Chopin thus demonstrate the diversity of the American landscape, their novels also engage a more homogeneous Americanism that flattens out those highlighted differences in order to reproduce a unified “United States” of America.

The role of race in this new *e pluribus unum* is elusive and challenging, sometimes difficult to see at all. Chopin’s novel, published in the same year as *McTeague*, follows so closely the techniques Norris uses to minimize race that we almost forget its palpable presence altogether. Cable, on the other hand, foregrounds race through multiple perspectives, based often in linguistic differences. He showcases the lack of communication among French, Creole and English speakers as one of racial and national mistranslation. Chopin uses French more narrowly.

Both Cable and Chopin were read primarily as regionalists until “recovery work” rediscovered the novels in the 1960s and 1950s, respectively⁶⁵. She was

recovered as a proto-feminist, he as an internationalist, a proto-hemisphericist. After being rediscovered, Cable and Chopin have been liberated from the regional box to a local-global network that is central to today's American literary criticism. Amy Kaplan confirms Chopin's literary and historical significance in her essay, "Nation, Region, and Empire," asserting that "Kate Chopin has rightfully been removed by feminist critics from the confines of local color in which she made her career" (254) because the novel clearly reaches far beyond the Louisiana region. However, because of this reach, regional novels opened the United States to criticism from the outside as Kaplan explains how they "deployed the local periphery to cast a critical eye on the national center in a critique of the social oppression that linked region and nation" (254) ⁶⁶. I am most interested in how *The Grandissimes* and *The Awakening* choose to, "cast a critical eye on the national center" through an asymmetrical representation of topics concerning class, race, and gender.

This chapter explores the asymmetrical representations of class, race, and gender, further opening the discussion to include the *intersectional* elements of their works. These intersections reveal the residues of French, Spanish, and American colonial pasts and presents. *The Awakening* highlights the French colonial residues and how they clash with the antagonist's American identity. *The Grandissimes*, on the other hand, weaves together a complicated, almost epic, fictional history of the Grandissimes family; this story touches on all three French, Spanish, and American colonial powers. This chapter investigates how *The Grandissimes* at once centers race and class, while implicitly discussing gender, and how *The Awakening*, a trailblazing

novel that overtly unsettles the gender norms that constrained women in the nineteenth century, seems unwilling to engage in topics of race.

Exploring Creole life, Culture, and Abuses with George Washington Cable

In *The Grandissimes*, Cable's first novel, we explore French Creole life in Louisiana, specifically, New Orleans and how it overlaps with Spanish colonial residues and a new American identity. Cable not only makes observations about Creole life but also takes on the discussion of slavery and accompanying racial tensions within the context of a nineteenth-century community. Similar to Jackson's *Ramona*, Cable follows the family history of a well-established, fictional family, the Grandissimes, and therefore spins a story that perpetuates surrounding southern folklore⁶⁷. Unlike *Ramona*, though, *The Grandissimes* did not produce the same kind of enthralling love story.

Using a narrator to detail the family history to the audience, Cable removes himself from the novel, perhaps as a way to distance himself from the sharp and often unflattering criticisms of the casual racism, classicism, and apathy of the French Creole community in New Orleans. The narrator discloses the tangled networks of families in the city, including a complicated history of the Grandissimes family rivals such as the Nancanou and De Grapion families. *The Grandissimes*, in the spirit of an anthropological history, details the intersections of race, class, and gender with an obvious awareness of the region of Louisiana, the swamps, and the seascapes. In this section, we will investigate three seemingly mundane scenes that clearly demonstrate all the possibilities of discussion that occur when you take a comparative approach to

reading. A comparative reading does require, though, that the reader pay careful attention to all the plot twists and character history. The first scene comes from our protagonist's, Joseph Frowenfeld's, first encounter with his new home; he, along with his sisters and mother, is disappointed at best. The next scene explores how this outsider, Joseph, eventually establishes an important American component to the novel. The final point of discussion will explore how Cable implicitly downplays gender through the powerful female character, Palmyre. Recall how in the last chapter I remarked that Du Bois's best efforts to accurately represent a comprehensive and representative picture of the all the intersecting social markers appearing within black and white communities in Toomsville, Alabama, he falls short in his discussion of gender. Similar to *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, *The Grandissimes* seems to downplay the importance of gender in favor of history, politics, and race, despite the novel's goal to offer an inside look into Louisiana creole life, also do the same in.

In a rhetorical move that mimics his own distancing, Cable's narrator also introduces the reader to the latest newcomer to the city, Mr. Joseph Frowenfeld. The distancing stems from the fact that the narrator and the other characters repeatedly refer to Frowenfeld as an "immigrant" (Cable 11, 14, 36, 37, 39, 42, 59...) and once as a "foreigner" (227)⁶⁸. Joseph Frowenfeld is a Northerner who sailed away from the North with his parents, and sisters to New Orleans. Almost immediately upon their arrival, Joseph, his parents, and sisters come down with the deadly yellow fever and only Joseph survives. Newly orphaned, Joseph begins a new life, alone in a strange new land. After burying his family, Joseph makes the acquaintance of Honoré

Grandissime, who offers him insider information on New Orleans and the social and political networks that structure the city. Dr. Charlie Keen, the town's local doctor, who, like McTeague received no formal training for his profession, befriends Joseph and takes him under his wing, contextualizing for him the social and political networks of the city about which Honoré first told him. Dr. Keene introduces Joseph to the Nancanou women, mother and daughter, Clotilde and Aurora. By the end of the novel, abolitionist and outsider Joseph Frowenfeld marries Clotilde, marking the beginning of the end of the Creole caste system.

Our first scene takes us to the opening of the novel where the land and seascape seem to demand payment in the form of Joseph's family in order to allow Joseph a new start. Beginning with the novel's second chapter, "The Fate of the Immigrant," I will trace Joseph's transition from outsider to insider within New Orleans. Already delineating him as an outsider, an "immigrant," the narrator not only foreshadows the Frowenfeld family's death by yellow fever, but also offers the family and the reader clues that hint at the kind of community in which they will be living. For example, the Frowenfelds awake to grapple with their "first morning of disappointment," as they look out at the nearing landscape of Louisiana. The narrator describes them as a "grave group" (8). But also, in parentheses, the narrator explains that while they are looking at the approaching land, a "(whirligig of jubilant mosquitoes spinning about each head)" (8). Later we discover that the Frowenfeld family contracts yellow fever, likely from that "whirligig of jubilant mosquitoes," and they all die, except for Joseph. The word choice of "whirligig" and "jubilant" is such a stark contrast to the

dreaded yellow fever, symptoms of which include fever, chills, headache, backache, and muscle aches. The mosquitoes seem delighted to swarm the newcomers and kill off any who cannot survive their bites, which does not evoke the most welcoming feeling for strangers in an unfamiliar location. Therefore, simultaneously, this new land with no hills seems like a “waste” that is filled with happy insects ready to suck your blood and holds potential dangers in the unknown region.

The family’s morning (later mourning for Joseph) disappointment stems from the fact that they see the flat, marshy landscape as “waste, and [see] the sky and the marsh meet in the east, the north, and the west” (8). This liminal landscape—one of water and land, similar to Zora’s beloved swamp from the last chapter—is not what they had expected to encounter. Moreover, the description of being surrounded by marsh on three sides suggests that this unfamiliar place surrounds and engulfs them, literally because of the Gulf of Mexico but also figuratively, because they are immersed in an entirely different region, one that they are not accustomed to. Their father suggests that they “turn this disappointment into a lesson”: to not “judge them or their land upon one or two hasty glances,” assuring his family “that hills would, no doubt, rise into view after a while” but as the narrator explains, “no hills rose” (8-9). As the narrator continues to describe how the family finds “solace in the appearance of distant forest land,” ironically, the landscape is actually ominous, foreboding, and “hung in mourning, darkened by gigantic cypresses, submerged; a land of reptiles, silence, shadow, decay” (9). Since the land itself is “in mourning,” “darkened,” and “submerged” (9), it seems almost fitting that Joseph would have to endure the loss of

his family in order to come to understand such a mournful place. Further, something almost evolutionary is happening within this quotation as we can imagine the “reptiles” are the city’s dwellers who have the potential to emerge from the “silence, shadow, [and] decay” (9) as fully civilized citizens of yet another colonial power: this time the transition from France to the United States. As an immigrant-outsider looking onto the city, Joseph can access the city’s entire history and the history of its inhabitants through his bird’s eye view.

One of the facets of city’s history is its changing linguistic identity. Joseph represents a true American, uniquely positioned as a monolingual, white “professor,” as Monsieur Fusilier sometimes respectfully refers to him. Further, in chapter nine, “Illustrating the Tractive Power of Basil,” we find that Joseph has established an apothecary shop located “in the rue Royale would [become] the rendezvous for a select company of English-speaking gentlemen, with a smart majority of physicians” (45). Already, we see not only how we see changes unfolding through Joseph’s perspective, we also realize that Joseph participates in some of those changes, especially in the case of his linguistic limitations.

In an attempt to cover all the different social markers framing New Orleans, Cable surprisingly downplays the importance of gender. Women are key to the novel, as well as historically speaking, especially during the nineteenth century when slavery was determined through mother. In *The Grandissimes*, three women dominate the novel: Nancanou mother and daughter, Clotilde and Aurora, respectively, and Palmyre Philosophe.

One of the most compelling aspects about Palmyre is that, like Joseph, she is an outsider, who quickly learns the intricacies of the social networks in which she lives and works. However, unlike Joseph, Palmyre has been enslaved, feared, and discredited time and again. As the narrator explains in Chapter 12, “The Philosophe,” “Palmyre Philosophe [was] noted for her taste and skill as a hair-dresser, for the efficiency of her spells and the sagacity of her divinations, but most of all for the chaste austerity with which she practiced the less baleful rites of the voudous” (60). This powerful woman, although called a philosopher, seems to strike fear because her practice of “the less baleful rites of the voudous” (60) and is, therefore, made out to be the scary, unpredictable, witch-like character, especially next to mother and daughter, Nancanou, who play the role of the helpless woman quite well and much to their advantage.

Moreover, in chapter 23, “Frowenfeld Keeps His Appointment,” Joseph goes to take care of Palmyre, who, has been wounded after we discover shoots her mistress’s (Madame Aurora Nancanou’s) enemy, Monsieur Agricola Fusilier, over the course of the novel. While Joseph attends Palmyre, it is clear that he is intimidated by her, as is evident by the chapter’s title. How could a woman intimidate this man so? The narrator offers some insight by explaining that as she sat “high [on] the bed...she silently [regards] the intruder with a pair of eyes that sent an icy thrill through him and fastened him where he stood” (133-134). Because of her formidable personality, we almost forget the other reason that Joseph has stopped in his tracks; her “untamable beauty” (134) is on full display when Joseph visits and she does nothing

to hide it. Despite her beauty, though, the novel ensures that we remain wary of her, especially given her generalization that “the entire masculine wing of the mighty and exalted race, three-fourths of whose blood bequeathed her none of its prerogatives, regarded her as legitimate prey” (135-136). Like Hopkins in the previous chapter, Cable opens the discussion of white men raping black women like Palmyre (despite her “three-fourths” blood quantum) but immediately closes it with the close of the chapter and the assurance that Joseph, “[t]he man before her did not” see her as prey (136). In other words, the novel terminates any nuanced discussion of Palmyre or her powerful influence on the novel’s main events.

Kate Chopin’s “New Woman”: Exploring the Roots of White Feminism

While Cable focuses his novel on New Orleans and Creole life, Kate Chopin’s novel, *The Awakening*, occludes race relations in the United States during the nineteenth century, and instead details a (white) female experience in nineteenth-century New Orleans and along the Louisiana Gulf coast. Like Cable’s outsider, Joseph Frowenfeld, Chopin’s female antagonist, Edna Pontellier, is also an outsider. Chopin was an outsider, like Edna, to the “Creole communities in Louisiana” as she was from a wealthy Irish American family in St. Louis. Her works include short stories, poetry, and two novels, including *The Awakening*. Literary scholars, Elizabeth Ammons and Valerie Rohy explain that the “novel was so unfavorably received that it is thought that Chopin chose to stop writing for publication as a result. Although it was considered scandalous at the time for its portrayal of a married woman’s resistance to conventional norms of sexuality and female propriety, the novel is now

regarded as an American classic” (Ammons and Rohy 71)⁶⁹. Chopin chisels out a new identity not only for her Edna but also for women across the Americas.

The novel affirms the up-and-coming generation of educated, professional, and unmarried women by unapologetically introducing audiences to the antagonist, Edna, who is an early example of a “New Woman.” Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg explains in her 1986 text, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, that the “New Woman,” a “novel social and political phenomenon,” which began in “[the] 1880s and the 1890s...originated as a literary phrase by Henry James...Young and unmarried, they rejected social conventions, especially those imposed on women” (176). Edna Pontellier fits this category perfectly: she is young—though married—and the premise of the novel concerns her self-aware struggle against the strict gender roles that constrain her, such as mother, wife, and upper-class woman.

Smith-Rosenberg follows up with a compelling point that this “New Woman” was “the unique product of American society, James argued, inconceivable in Europe” (176). American exceptionalism appears again, this time through a movement that could only manifest within the United States. The concept of the “New Woman” is radical in its resistance to imposed gender constraints and it is national as an example of a “unique product of American society” (176). When we connect this discussion of a “unique” American phenomenon to Chopin’s use of it in *The Awakening*, we have a chance to map the literary geography of Louisiana. Through Chopin’s imagined mapping of Louisiana creole society, we see that

although the novel does not explicitly engage with topics of race or racial justice, it does so *implicitly* through its marked absence.

Further, *The Awakening* operates with an abundance of racial language much in the same way that I described in Chapter One, “An Analysis of a ‘California south.’” Recall how *McTeague* uses racially charged language: nominally, in order to paint a specific regional perspective of a literary California. As for Chopin, *The Awakening* narrates a specific regional perspective of a literary Louisiana, specifically the urban setting of New Orleans and the seascape, vacation destination that is Grand Isle. Therefore, similar to Norris, Chopin also strays from topics explicitly about race, but as is the case with *McTeague*, the racial tensions persist in *The Awakening*, especially when the novel’s setting is geographically located in one of the most racially contested regions in the country: the American South.

Moreover, when Edna’s “mind wander[s] back over her stay at Grand Isle ... to discover wherein [that] summer had been different from any and every other summer of her life, [she] ... realize[s]... [she is] seeing with different eyes and making the acquaintance of new conditions in herself that colored and changed her environment” (Chopin 88). The words “colored” and “environment” implicitly hint at race and space through their explicit silences á la Toni Morrison, thus further complicating a text that portrays Edna’s journey toward selfhood through the “alien hands” of the mulatto and quadroon servants hovering at the edges of the text, a scene to which I will return later⁷⁰.

Quickly summarizing this melancholic novel, we learn Edna's daily life as she begins to discover who she is, first, as a woman, then as an artist, a lover, a friend, a wife, and, lastly, as a mother. Note that these roles are listed in order of importance for Edna. She does not care for and openly questions the social roles that come with being the wife of a wealthy Louisiana Creole businessman, Léonce Pontellier, multi-lingual, intelligent, and successful businessman. Léonce is the first character to which the novel introduces us, establishing him as Edna's opposite.

Together they have two sons, Etienne and Raoul. At the beginning of the novel, the Pontelliers are vacationing on Grand Isle at a resort on the Gulf of Mexico that is managed by Madame Lebrun and her two sons, Robert and Victor. After Robert Lebrun actively pursues Edna's affections and attention, they start having an affair and eventually fall in love. Edna's closest friend, Adèle Ratignolle, serves as Edna's constant reminder of her duties as a wife and mother—the duties she questions much to her husband's dismay. After leaving Grand Isle and returning to New Orleans, Edna retreats from her social roles as a wealthy wife and mother, and instead spends her time painting, exploring more intimate connections with fellow artist, Madame Reisz, an accomplished pianist, her love with Robert, and a dalliance with a young and persistent flirt, Alcée Arobin. The novel closes with Edna thinking of her assigned gender roles, after Robert has ended their affair, and she is alone with her thoughts. Suddenly, she walks into the ocean and the novel ends, abruptly, with the unspoken understanding that Edna has drowned herself.

This section examines how precisely because of the novel's concluding suicide, *The Awakening* humanizes the "New Woman." This humanization, though, is one that benefits only a particular class, gender, and race of people, upper class white women, because through our increased attention to understanding Edna, the novel notably omits race. Through a close examination of four scenes, I will demonstrate how race persists and demands to be noticed first when Edna explains her background, then, when the novel describes the setting at Grand Isle, then, as mentioned briefly, we will explore the scene with alien hands; and finally, the suicide scene, in which she, like McTeague and Marcus, is literally engulfed by her watery landscape.

Our first scene comes very early on, when the novel provides Edna the chance to explain her background in her own words to a group of people in Grand Isle that she was originally born in Kentucky and married into Pontellier family, descendants of the rich Louisiana Creole heritage. Already, we see Edna clearly and succinctly identify her connection to slavery, yet the novel maintains a safe distance from race. However, even though Edna is not a direct descendant of the Louisiana Creole people, she is a direct descendent of this nation's complex heritage of slavery because of her "father's Mississippi plantation" (47). Despite this early piece of history, *The Awakening* seems to exclusively prioritize questions of gender and its socio-political intersections with class.

The next example of the novel's indirect use of racial language comes from the following scene, which highlights Chopin's realist techniques in the following summer scene:

The people walked in little groups toward the beach. They talked and laughed; some of them sang. There was a band playing down at Klein's hotel, and the strains reached them faintly, tempered by the distance. There were strange, rare odors abroad—a tangle of the sea smell and of weeds and damp, new-plowed earth, mingled with the heavy perfume of a field of white blossoms somewhere near. But the night sat lightly upon the sea and the land. There was no weight of darkness; there were no shadows. The white light of the moon had fallen upon the world like the mystery and the softness of sleep.
(Chopin 73)

This scene sets the stage for what the summer at Grand Isle will be like. Paying close attention to this description reflects a strong presence of whiteness that does not seem a coincidence, especially given the fact that colorism and racism is a big part of Creole culture, as evidence by Cable's in-depth analysis of Creole caste system. Moreover, this quotation explains that even in the night, "[t]here was no weight of darkness" (73). In a subtle way, the novel assures its readers that the "field of white blossoms" and the "white light of the moon" will steer clear of race. These descriptions of whiteness, however, highlight race's absence from the novel.

Our final example of how the novel chooses to center gender over the other interconnected social markers always at play, takes place in the following scene when the narrator details for us how much trouble Edna is having sleeping after she spends a late-night alone with Robert LeBrun. This passage, read through an eco-intersectional lens, exposes the wealth of information that we might miss when we

limit our scope and read only for gender. The novel carefully and subtly constructs a sense of otherness. For example, in chapter XXII, the narrator explains that Edna:

slept but a few hours. They were troubled and feverish hours, disturbed with dreams that were intangible, that eluded her, leaving only an impression upon her half-awakened senses of something unattainable. She was up and dressed in the cool of the early morning. The air was invigorating and steadied somewhat her faculties. However, she was not seeking refreshment or help from any source, either external or from within. She was blindly following whatever impulse moved her, as if she had placed herself in alien hands for direction, and freed her soul of responsibility. (Chopin 79)

Paying special attention to the presence of “hands,” they seem to highlight Edna’s very relationship to her body, a struggle that manifests through her attempts to learn how to swim. Moreover, less attainable than the “alien hands,” is a clear-headed and secure frame of mind as is evident by Edna’s “half-awakened sense of something unattainable” (79). The “air” around her, though, “[invigorates and steadies] somewhat her faculties” (79). Importantly, though, however crucial the air is here for her, its absence during her drowning is all that more palpable.

Moreover, as we get to know Edna, we learn that her sense of being an outsider runs deeply. The novel establishes this insider-outside dichotomy best when describing the locals on vacation at Grand Isle. The narrator explains that, “[m]ost of them walked into the water as though into a native element. The sea was quiet now, and swelled lazily in broad billows that melted into one another and did not break except upon the beach in little foamy crests that coiled back like slow, white serpents” (73). Not only does she struggle with swimming, our next topic of discussion, but also, they “walked into the water as though into a native element” (73). The Louisiana Creole people vacationing at Grand Isle alongside the Pontelliers

are almost amphibious with their ability to “[walk into the water as though into a native element” (73). As we know, Edna is not native to the region or to the water, as her troubles with learning to swim never escape her. There are almost no boundaries—literally and figuratively—within this seascape scene. The waves have “swelled lazily in broad billows that *melted into one another* and *did not break* except upon the beach in little foamy crests that *coiled back like slow, white serpents*” (73, emphasis added). This fluid movement is easy, seamless, unlike Edna’s relationship to swimming, the water, or even herself. Moreover, the water seems to harbor danger in its wave since they “[coil] back like slow, white serpents” (73).

An interesting, final scene intersects the presence of the presence of hands and Edna’s swimming in the following scene. This quotation illustrates the different themes featured prominently in the novel: internal and external forces, the presence of ‘alien hands’ as the symbol of external forces, the sea, and Edna’s struggle to learn to swim in it:

Edna had attempted all summer to learn to swim. She had received instructions from both the men and women; in some instances from the children. Robert had pursued a system of lessons almost daily; and he was nearly at the point of discouragement in realizing the futility of his efforts. A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand near by that might reach out and reassure her. (Chopin 73)

None of her outside sources will help her, which is an interesting literary move given that these nationally located literary choices reach far beyond the nation-state. Edna wants to isolate herself and find the answer within despite the fact that a “certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water” that would only subside with the presence of “a hand near by that might reach out and reassure her” (73). The

novel, foreclosing any other outside options, establishes that the only thing to reassure her is an unattached, imagined, hand, which never manifests in the form of a person because that “dread” returns when she drowns herself.

When we arrive at our final scene for discussion, it is no coincidence that Edna is alone. The narrator offers some insight into Edna’s thoughts before she walks into the ocean. For example, while thinking to herself about how Robert “was [the only] human being whom she wanted near” (175), her children infiltrate her thoughts. The narrator explains that when they appear, they come to her “like antagonists who had overcome her; who had overpowered and sought to drag her into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her days. But she knew a way to elude them. She was not thinking of these things when she walked down to the beach” (175). Interesting, the narrator almost suggests that Edna’s children “[overpower] and [seek] to drag into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her days” (175). Motherhood seems to precipitate her inevitable “soul’s slavery” (175). Unlike Toni Morrison’s 1987 novel, *Beloved*, where the protagonist, Sethe kills her children to save them from slavery, instead, Edna kills herself in order to free herself from the slavery of motherhood. This kind of careless use of the term slavery reflects how Edna, an upper-class white woman, who is also the direct descendent of a slave-owning plantation, equates motherhood with slavery.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, *The Awakening* is a clear example of the literary and then social movement of the “New Woman.” When Edna finally learns how to swim, the narrator explains that:

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring

and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before. (Chopin 73)

This quotation doubles as an example of the type of woman Edna is trying to be—a woman who more than her roles as mother and wife, but who is also an artist and a fallible human being—and of the “New Woman” movement. Chopin has carefully crafted a novel that exclusively prioritizes gender and the confining gender roles assigned by heteronormative socio-political customs. For example, Edna has the time and money to learn to gain “control [over] the working of her body and her soul” but *chooses* to “swim far out, where no woman had swum before” (73), which eventually closes the novel.

New Orleans: A Watery Borderlands with Strong Currents from the Past and to an Unknown Future

This chapter has explored how two writers, who both are commonly associated with the American South, reach beyond the nation-state with their global-reaching novels. For Cable, the global reach of the novel beyond the United States makes sense only if there are people, such as Joseph Frowenfeld, who serves as a kind of leader helping the community transition from French Louisiana to American Louisiana. For Chopin, however, *The Awakening*’s global reach, although heavily featured, is less important than discussions of gender, especially for educated, upper class white women. The novel zeroes in on gender so precisely that we almost ignore the subtle moments of racial language present, which glaringly erases the socio-historical place the novel is set: a living ghost town, alive in the present but haunted by different pasts.

This chapter has explored the uneven representations of class, race, and gender, expanding the discussion to include the *intersectional* elements of *The Grandissimes* and *The Awakening*. These intersections reveal the residues of French, Spanish, and American colonial pasts and presents. In the case of *The Awakening*, the novel highlights the French colonial residues and how they clash with the antagonist's American identity. As for *The Grandissimes*, on the other hand, the novel weaves together a tangled history of the Grandissimes family, representing a *mestizaje* of sorts, a community comprised of all three, distinct colonial powers: France, Spain, and the United States. As discussed, *The Grandissimes* at once centers race and class, while implicitly discussing gender. In a reversal of sorts, *The Awakening*, a trailblazing novel that overtly unsettles the gender norms that constrained women in the nineteenth century, seems unwilling to engage in topics of race.

Coda:

This project has examined how different descriptions of interior and exterior spaces narrate social markers of race, gender, and class in surprisingly similar ways. I use landscape reading to explore how these similarities occur even though each writer speaks from a distinct region within the United States, creating literary geographies. Thinking outside the nineteenth century back toward pre-California and the hemispheric South, this dissertation has reoriented not only spatial categories but also the temporal divisions underlying periodization.

As I have read the works of Jackson, Ruiz de Burton, Norris, Delany, Hopkins, Du Bois, Cable, and Chopin comparatively—beyond genres and borders—this work has created exciting opportunities to engage in global conversations that unsettle American exceptionalism and the so-called stability of the nation-state. By emphasizing how the colonial residues of the Spanish, French, and Mexican empires persist in the nineteenth century, my work foregrounds American literatures in languages other than English and thus contributes to comparative, transnational approaches to American literature.

Notes:

¹ John Muir published *Our National Parks* in 1901. In the preface, Muir explains that the book is “made up sketches...to show forth the beauty, grandeur, and all-embracing usefulness of our wild mountain forest reservations and parks, with a view to inciting people to come and enjoy them, and them into their hearts, that so at length their preservation and right use be made sure.”

² For more information on the history of national parks and the implications of their creation within the United States, see Laura Alice Watt’s important text, *The Paradox*

of *Preservation: Wilderness and Working Landscapes at Point Reyes National Seashore* (2017), especially chapter 1, “Landscapes, Preservation, and the National Park Ideal.” See also Mark Spencer’s important study, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Creation of the National Parks* (Oxford UP, 1999).

³ Muir is not alone in advocating for the federal protection of natural reserves as Henry Nash Smith accounts the relationship between the U.S. and its varied landscapes through the lens of literature in his foundational 1950 work *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Nash details how several Americans, born and naturalized, intellectuals and politicians, contemplated ways to map out a specifically American landscape, particularly within the symbol of the American West.

⁴ This quotation can be found at the National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/frde/learn/historyculture/stories.htm#targetText=%E2%80%9CThere%20is%20nothing%20so%20American,lives%20of%20all%20of%20us.%E2%80%9D&targetText=Read%20more%20Presidential%20quotations%20about%20our%20National%20Parks.>

⁵ For more in-depth critical writing on racial formation within the literature of the United States, and the Americas more broadly, see Eric J. Sundquist’s text, ‘*To Wake the Nations*’: *Race in the Making of American Literature* (1994); John D. Kerkering’s *The Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2003); Robert S. Levine’s *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism* (2008).

⁶ The following texts offer a closer examination of regionalism, naturalism, and realism, and their commentary on gender and genre: Elizabeth Ammons’s *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (1991); Donna M. Campbell’s *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915* (1997); Judith Fetterley’s and Marjorie Pryse’s *Writing out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture* (2003); and Philip Joseph’s *American Literary Regionalism in a Global Age* (2007).

⁷ This project explores a period of time, from 1859 to 1911, which reflects the publication dates of the novels in this study, starting with Delany’s serialized *Blake: or the Huts of America* (1859-1861) and ending with Du Bois’s *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911).

⁸ Du Bois’s color line is not only located within the U.S. South. The color line moves beyond issues solely concerning race as we can see from the co-edited text by Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum, *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W.E.B. Du Bois*, a collection of literary critical essays on how Du Bois extends, perhaps unwittingly, his intellectual prowess to issues of gender and sexuality. This kind of nuanced scholarship introduces Du Bois’s important sociological and literary work in a way that invites a more expansive audience for an author not particularly known for his critical thoughts on gender and sexuality. Expanding readership and literary criticism beyond familiar conceptual categories and the nominal divisions of genre is precisely the kind of work my project attempts.

⁹ In addition to Williams's critical work on the intersection of cultural studies and the British countryside, see also his novel, *Border Country* (1960), about his native Wales.

¹⁰ For more information on how scholars who also see the linguistic quality of landscapes, see Anne Whiston Spirn's multi-genre book, *The Language of Landscape* (1998), particularly the first section of the first chapter, which is entitled, "Landscape is Language." Spirn, a professor of landscape architecture and planning at MIT, uses poetry as well as critical scholarship to elucidate how we construct and reconstruct our different relationships to the landscape, including the rural, urban, and natural landscapes.

¹¹ Intersectionality, Kimberlé Crenshaw's ground-breaking 1989 concept from her essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics" (1989) is an generative lens through which one can hold space for all the complex social markers that categorize people within racial hierarchies. The main point for intersectionality is that these social markers that define and divide us from everyone else should not be elided but examined in order to capture a fuller, more accurate, albeit more complicated, picture of how pervasive social markers can be. For more information on the history and evolution of intersectionality, see the article, "Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory" co-authored by Devon W. Carbado, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Vickie M. Mays, and Barbara Tomlinson" (2013). See also Crenshaw's latest edited text, *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines* (2019), edited by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz.

¹² To be clear, this project is not the only attempt at intellectualizing landscape and nationalism in the context of the United States. However, this project approaches ecocriticism through an intersectional framework that centers not only the land but also the people who have been systematically erased from having a connection to it. For more literary analysis offered through an ecocritical reading, look to the following informative texts: Melanie L. Simo's *Literature of Place: Dwelling on the Land before Earth Day 1970* (2005); David Mazel's essay, 'A beautiful and thrilling specimen': George Catlin, the Death of the Wilderness, and the Birth of the National Subject," which appears in the text, *Reading the Earth: New Directions in the Study of Literature and the Environment* (1998), edited by Michael P. Branch, Rochelle Johnson, Daniel Patterson, and Scott Slovic. Within this essay, Mazel explores the intersections of environmentalism, nationalism, and the creation of an American identity but does not address race, class, or gender specifically. Finally, Howard Horowitz's *By the Law of Nature: Form and Value in Nineteenth-Century America* (1991), "examine[s] the ubiquitous, hybrid, and protean invocation of nature in literature and other arenas precisely as a register of conflicts in cultural forms, the conception of value, and liberal premises about the self and its relation to social structures" (16). For an analysis of the intersection of the social and the political, see Don Mitchell's text, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000), a text

which has greatly informed my understanding of the intersection between landscapes and cultures.

¹³ Carey McWilliams, American author, editor, and lawyer, known for his writing on California culture and politics, originally published *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* in 1948. In 2016, a third edition was updated by Alma M. García.

¹⁴ Warford's 2009 essay is titled, "'An Eloquent and Impassioned Plea': The Rhetoric of Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don*"

¹⁵ California entered statehood on September 9, 1850, becoming the 31st state of the Union.

¹⁶ For a detailed theoretical framing of mestizaje see Gloria E. Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: A New Mestiza* (1987), particularly chapter seven, "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness."

¹⁷ Ibid. This quotation can be found in chapter one of *Borderlands/La Frontera* where Anzaldúa defines the U.S.-Mexican border as an open wound (25).

¹⁸ See especially the introduction, "American Indians and American Identities" and Chapter Three, "Literary Indians and Ethnographic Objects."

¹⁹ For more detailed information on Ruiz de Burton see the foundational work of Rosaura Sanchez and Beatriz Pita who compiled and co-edited the author's personal letters in the text, *Conflicts of Interest: The Letters of Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton* (2001). They also provide crucial biographical information on the author in the introduction to *The Squatter and the Don*, (1997), an edition published through Arte Publico Press, as part of the project, Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage.

²⁰ In future work, I would like to further examine her role as an interlocutor and as an invisible translator of the Treaty á la Venuti, which would help further nuance this project's idea of her re-reading of the Treaty as more than an interpretation but a translation.

²¹ Expanding upon Tomás Almaguer's work in *Racial Fault Lines* where he historicizes California's place in the United States' western history, I want to explore not only the geopolitics of language but also race relations within California. Using California as a case study, Almaguer argues that in order to better conceptualize and historicize the western United States, we must move beyond the "black/white encounter" (2) that has dominated discussions of race relations. Almaguer's California case study to better conceptualizes how Ruiz de Burton is not only constructing race and social relations in her works as a whole but also to better understand that her construction of a geopolitically specific "Californio" identity is a complication of the black/white binary.

²² While this idea of the "feedback loop" is so specifically focused within Warner's discussion of the *Spectator*, in his essay, "Publics and Counterpublics," I argue that there is a connection to Ruiz de Burton's re-reading of the Treaty in *The Squatter and the Don* because as Warner describes "[a]nything that addresses a public is meant to undergo circulation" (63) and Ruiz de Burton wants to create a public that becomes aware of the Treaty and how the U.S. failed to uphold it. Thus, she "develop[s] a

reflexivity about [the novel's] own circulation, coordinating its readers' relations to other readers" (70).

²³ Here I emphasize the word "social" because the Treaty has already granted Mexicans (including Californios) living north of the new border legal citizenship as Americans.

²⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of the legal, political, and social value of whiteness, see Ian Haney López's *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (1996).

²⁵ Norris further develops this metaphor of "forces" in his tome *The Octopus: A Story of California* (1901), a story about the railroad's growing control over American politics, the economy, and agricultural exports such as wheat in southern California. This novel is the first in an unfinished trilogy (*The Epic of the Wheat*) about the wheat economy in the United States.

²⁶ The premise of Mohamed Zayani's 1998 book, *Reading the Symptom: Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and the Dynamics of Capitalism*.

²⁷ Jillmarie Murphy importantly asserts in her book, *Attachment, Place, and Otherness in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2018) that a small portion of "Irish, German, and Italian immigrants continued to settle in the United States." And while many of these "immigrants settled in New York" others settled in San Francisco, the other "port of entry" (Murphy). Further, one of San Francisco's official landmarks, California Hall, was built by the German community in 1912; Polk Street is still commonly referred to by its German name, *Polk Strasse*.

²⁸ For an interesting essay about the relationship between humor and naturalism in *McTeague* see, "Grotesque Naturalism: The Significance of the Comic in *McTeague*" (1989) by James E. Carson. The essay does not, unfortunately, cover the variety show scene discussed here.

²⁹ An important note: there has been critical scholarship on Norris's use of racist tropes, however, these works do not discuss these tropes through a comparative and eco-intersectional framework, which is the goal of this dissertation. For some examples of the critical scholarship on Norris and race see: "The Nature of the Beast: Scientific Theories of Race and Sexuality in 'McTeague'" (2009) by Rebecca Nisetich; "Out of the Gene Pool: Primitivism and Ethnicity in Frank Norris' 'McTeague'" (2004) by Gina M. Rossetti; and the previously cited, "McTeague as Ethnic Stereotype" (1987) by Hugh J. Dawson.

³⁰ As previously established in the introduction, I define landscape literature as literature that creates settings or descriptions of different landscapes. These descriptions piece together an eco-intersectional framework that approaches landscape as a medium and product of language. Through this process of reading nineteenth-century American literatures, a kind of literary geography emerges, which helps audiences uncover how writers who are read for their associations with different literary regions translate those specific locations into their novels

³¹ I am using Don Mitchell's definition of cultural geography from his 2000 *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*.

³² While the Du Bois novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), and Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1901) come much later than Delany's *Blake* (1859-1861), I am

grouping them together as a case study of the U.S. South and their descriptions of typically southern interior and exterior spaces, natural and constructed, including but not limited to the swamp, the plantation, plantation kitchens and parlors, and slave quarters.

³³ Within a theatrical context, a set piece scene is a physically constructed set where a particular event or scene takes place. As a literary device, which is how I will be using the term throughout this project, set piece scenes are highly conventionalized interior spaces meaning that they are often the same types of rooms such as parlor rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. Within these highly conventional interior spaces, typical, everyday conversations occur; it's important to note that the "typical" activities that occur within these spaces are gendered as female, especially within the context of nineteenth-century American literatures. In other words, the spaces that the set pieces represent are maintained by female characters but are ultimately owned by the male heads of household. Therefore, as I will explore in this project, first starting with *Blake* and then moving toward a more in-depth analysis of interior spaces in *Contending Forces*, I am most interested in how Delany and Hopkins use these highly conventional spaces in such a way that underscores the gender binary at work within their novels. For this chapter, I explain how Delany's use of the set piece scene reinforces not only the gender binary but also the racial hierarchies at play. For Hopkins, her entire novel is set primarily within these highly conventional spaces but I will illustrate through a careful spatial analysis how the gender and racial hierarchies actually break down revealing the precarity and instability of these socially constructed markers of race and gender. Du Bois, however, departs from this method, and relies more heavily on exterior landscapes such as the swamp, the plantation, and urban centers.

³⁴ Delany's *Blake* was serialized from 1859-1861. In 1859, the novel was serially published in the *Anglo-African Magazine*, and in 1861 and 1862 in the *Weekly Anglo-African*. It was not published in complete book form until 1970.

³⁵ The United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 on September 18, 1850 as part of the Compromise of 1850 between Southern slave-holding states and the Northern Free-Soilers.

³⁶ As illustrated in chapter one of this project, "An Analysis of the 'California south,'" I explain how the Article V of the Treaty of Guadalupe underscores the ever-changing boundaries between Mexico and the U.S., thus speaking to the fluctuating borders.

³⁷ This verse comes from the website:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+26&version=NIV>

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ This definition of confederate comes from the Online Etymology Dictionary, which can be located at www.etymonline.com.

⁴⁰ The novel—serialized and released over several years in the *Anglo-African Magazine* in 1859 and in the *Weekly Anglo-African* in 18621 and 1862—remains incomplete because the final chapters have been lost.

⁴¹ Martin Delany is often cited as the "Father of Black Nationalism."

⁴² In 1961, John Hope Franklin published his groundbreaking historical analysis of Reconstruction called, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, which furthered the work that Du Bois started in *Black Reconstruction*.

⁴³ From now until the end of this dissertation, I will refer to Pauline Hopkins's novel, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South*, as a shortened title, *Contending Forces*.

⁴⁴ Here I refer to the female-dominated relationships in the novel: mother and daughter, sisters, and female friends, sharing with each other the spirit of sisterly solidarity, something Patricia Hill Collins would refer to as "black feminist thought," which defines in the following excerpt "Black feminist thought consists of theories or specialized thought produced by African-American women intellectuals designed to express a Black woman's standpoint" (Hill Collins 19).

⁴⁵ Hopkins is in conversation with Du Bois and although she would not call herself an interlocutor between Du Bois and Delany, I am referring to her as such because of how she connects Du Bois and Delany via an exploration of the Woman Question and the Negro Question. Delany and Du Bois only implicitly address the role of women in their novels, but Hopkins centers the intersection of race and gender in her scholarship.

⁴⁶ I cannot help but reflect on the parallels between the nineteenth and twenty-first century versions of Boston: racially segregated then and now. For example, the December series in the Boston Globe that chronicles Boston's relationship to racism that discuss whether or not Boston is a racist city confirm how central race is to the city's social and geographic identity. The series may be accessed through the following link: <http://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/boston-racism-image-reality/series/image/>.

⁴⁷ For more information about how Du Bois addresses "how it feels to be a problem" see chapter one, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).

⁴⁸ These questions bring about the discussion of mixed-raced individuals, referred to in the novel as mulattos. While mixed-race studies is not the focus of this project, it is worth exploring further because of the questions it raises in terms of the "one drop" rule and blood quantum, topics that Pauline Hopkins explores in her novel, *Of One Blood*, a novel serialized from the years 1902-1903.

⁴⁹ This woman-centered strategy of valuing different ways of knowing is employed by other female writers whose work I analyze in this project, such as María Amparo Ruíz de Burton, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Kate Chopin.

⁵⁰ The title will be referred to by the abbreviation, *Quest*, from now until the end of this chapter.

⁵¹ The Civil War Amendments refer to the passing of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments from 1865-1870.

⁵² Later in this section I will discuss how the silver fleece mentioned here is also a reference to Du Bois's 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapter VII, "Of the Quest of the Golden Fleece."

⁵³ The era of Reconstruction followed the U.S. Civil War during the years of 1865-1877.

⁵⁴ The purity/impurity binary is a topic that was heavily discussed in the Hopkins's section of this chapter. Here, as we learn from later in the novel, is an example where Du Bois is grappling with the very material and visceral implications/consequences of the Woman Question intersecting with the Negro Question.

⁵⁵ The term "woodlore" is relates directly to the landscape because of the word "wood" imbedded within the larger term. Charles W. Chesnutt's 1901 essay, "American Superstitions and Folk-Lore of the South," comes to mind as an essay that relates *folklore* and region. This turn-of-the-century essay seeks to highlight particular superstitions from African Americans living within plantation communities of the old South.

⁵⁶ Du Bois uses the Greek myth of Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, and his quest of the golden fleece to *explain* the importance and almost myth-like quality of the cotton industry. Notably, Du Bois changes the name of the cotton from the golden fleece in *Souls* to the silver fleece in *Quest*.

⁵⁷ Such organizations as the Freedman's Bureau were established at the end of the Civil War but were disregarded by President Andrew Johnson after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination. For more information regarding the more detailed historiography of Reconstruction, see John Hope Franklin's *Reconstruction After the Civil War* (1961), a historic text that writes against the grain of the one-time widely accepted Dunning School.

⁵⁸ Freedom through *academic* and not *industrial* education reflects a long-time debate between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, one which Du Bois directly addresses in a lengthy response Chapter III, "Of Booker T. Washington and Others" in *The Souls of Black Folk*.

⁵⁹ This divine right to the land west of the Mississippi River is best exemplified by John Gast's 1872 painting, "American Progress" where a larger-than-life white, female angel guides white settlers as they cross the American frontier. The movement in the painting is clearly east to west but, importantly, the only figures who look up at the white angel are the indigenous figures, one of whom is a bare-breasted woman, and three animals (a dog or coyote, a bear, and a leaping deer). The remaining figures, all white men, walk casually under the angel's guidance.

⁶⁰ An important aside: Elspeth controls the seeds of the silver fleece. Zora and Bles go to her cabin at midnight under the light of a full moon where she hides the seeds in the floorboards. Thus, as much control John Taylor and the Cresswells want to have over the cotton industry, they do not have control over these special seeds because Elspeth controls them in *her* cabin that lies deep within the swamp, outside the bounds of Cresswell land.

⁶¹ This Senator Smith from New Jersey is Miss Smith's brother. The leaders of the cotton industry, the Cresswells and John Taylor, have been trying to influence Senator Smith to urge his sister to give up her work at the Negro School in order to open the land for the planting of more cotton.

⁶² Remembering from the last chapter that Cuba represents a kind of promise land, where the revolution for freedom will unfold.

⁶³ For more information on the linguistic complexities of the term, see Carolyn Allen's essay, "Creole Then and Now: The Problem of Definition" (1998). For more information on linguistic and ethnic Creole differences from the Gilded Age within the context of literary theory refer to Gavin Jones's important text, *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America* (1991).

⁶⁴ In Cable's *The Grandissimes*, the novel opens with a masked ball that is taking place in "the Théâtre ... in the city we now call New Orleans, in the month of September, and in the year 1803" (Cable 1). The Louisiana Purchase Treaty was signed on April 20, 1803. However, the complete treaty did not reach the United States until July 14 but was announced and ratified on July 4, 1803. Therefore, as readers of both Cable's and Chopin's novels, we see the transition from New Orleans as a newly acquired territory to a thriving and ever-changing metropolis, a port-of-entry to and from the Global South.

⁶⁵ Only when the landmark *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) was reversed by one of the biggest moments of racial legislation in the United States, *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), did literary scholars return to *The Grandissimes* and value it for its careful analysis of racism and racist structures in and around New Orleans.

⁶⁶ Find Amy Kaplan's essay, "Nation, Region, and Empire" in the collection of critical essays on American literary scholarship, *The Columbia History of the American Novel* (1991).

⁶⁷ See, for example, Chesnutt's collection of short stories, *The Conjure Woman* (1899) set in the fictional town Payetsville, North Carolina, which participates in the crafting of and perpetuating of southern folklore.

⁶⁸ Using the online database, Project Gutenberg, which was founded in 1971 by Michael Hart, it is the oldest digital library. A simple search of the word, "immigrant," reveals that Joseph is referred to as such 26 times throughout the entire novel. I have listed a preliminary selection of examples where Joseph is labeled an immigrant. One may access the e-book by following this link: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12280/12280-h/12280-h.htm>

⁶⁹ The quotation comes from the text, *American local color writing, 1880-1920* (1998), which Ammons and Rohy co-edited. The work serves as a collection of local color writing from the turn of the nineteenth century. In the collection, Ammons and Rohy have included important biographical information about the local authors, which includes a short story by Pauline Hopkins, who was discussed in Chapter Two.

⁷⁰ Toni Morrison. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." *Michigan Quarterly* 28.1 (1988): 1-34. Print. Adams, Jessica. *Wounds of Returning: Race, Memory, and Property on the Postslavery Plantation*. New edition edition, The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

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